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MONSIGNY

By Justus Miles Forman

TOWARD the middle of the Summer in which Isabeau reached her twentieth year her father, Lord Stratton, had asked a few people out to Château Monsigny from Paris for a fortnight. Three of them had, greatly to his annoyance, been called across the Channel at the eleventh hour, but the other two, a certain English widow of possibly five-and-thirty, whom he had met the preceding Winter in Cannes, and a young man, the Honorable Ashton Beresford, had accepted the invitation. Lord Stratton was annoyed about the other people, because without them the presence of the English widow, Mrs. Marlowe, must bear a certain point which he, as a widower, wished to avoid. He had relied on the others to cloak his seeing a great deal of Mrs. Marlowe day by day, for he had come to the age when men consider many things important which a younger and more impetuous man would scorn. He believed himself genuinely interested in this woman, for she appealed to him in almost every way, and he had begun to feel very lonely. He realized that in time, probably no long time, his only child, Isabeau, would marry, and he looked forward to a solitary old age with genuine distaste. He had not a great love to offer, he knew that well, for nearly all the love of his life was bound within a certain marble tomb that stood in the ancient chapel of Château Monsigny; but he had a perfectly normal desire to live as did others, to seek a companionship sweetened by such love as remained in him, against

the time when his daughter must leave him.

Mrs. Marlowe was the first of the guests to arrive, and soon Lord Stratton was showing her over the beautiful grounds of the château. Mrs. Marlowe looked about her with a very obvious delight. She was a pretty woman, who might well have been lovely a few years earlier in life, for she was quite five-and-thirty and looked somewhat tired and worn, particularly about the eyes, as if long unhappiness had robbed her of much of the beauty she might otherwise have preserved for many years.

"How perfectly beautiful it is!" she cried, softly. "How beautiful it is! One ought to be very happy here, Lord Stratton."

"It is beautiful," said Lord Stratton. "I have always held that it is the finest château short of the Loire country—the finest in private ownership, I mean. Of course, Versailles and St.-Germain and even Fontainebleau are more impressive, but hardly so beautiful, I think. Yes," he went on, after a pause, "one might be very happy here. I have been very happy here—and very unhappy—and I have been neither the one nor the other, but very apathetic, for a long time. That is much like every one's life, isn't it? But I am fond of Château Monsigny, and shall never feel quite at home anywhere else, I think, not even in Strobe Manor. You see, I married here, and have lived here ever since—more than twenty years now."

"Twenty years?" said Mrs. Marlowe, thoughtfully. "That is a long

time. And you will live here always, will you not?"

"Not after Isabeau marries," said he, "and of course she will marry some time. Indeed, I should be glad, in a way, if it could be soon. Isabeau is twenty, and I believe in early marriages. One has the keenest capacity for happiness when one is young. Of course, it will be a great pain to me, a dreadful wrench when she leaves me, but I wish her to be happy. My father and I shall make our permanent home, then, in England, in Strobe Manor, though I should hope very often to visit Isabeau here. Indeed, I know my father would insist on it, for he and Isabeau are always together."

"Ah, the earl!" said Mrs. Marlowe, with a little shiver. "I used to see him at Nice, though I never met him, I believe. Do you know, I am rather afraid of the earl, he is such a fierce old gentleman; his eyes seem to pierce fairly through one."

Lord Stratton laughed. "Oh, you will get over that," said he. "My father is not so fierce as he looks. Indeed, he is usually the mildest of men, though he takes strange dislikes to people sometimes. He has aged greatly in the past five years—you know he is nearly eighty—so that he is at times a bit peculiar, not quite himself. Of course, he is absolutely harmless always, but when he is in one of his moods he is a little inconsequent and embarrassingly frank as to his opinions. I hope you won't take offense at anything he may say. As a rule, you know, he is as reasonable as you or I, and his mental vigor is as astonishing as his physical strength. I dare say you have heard of his strength. It is almost unbelievable. He is always forgetting about it and breaking things. I have seen him do the most amazing feats. He is, even now, many times stronger than I, and I am not weak. But we were speaking of Isabeau, and the possibility of her marrying."

"Why should you leave Château Monsigny when she marries?" asked

Mrs. Marlowe. "Oh, I see! it belongs to her, does it not?"

"Yes," said Lord Stratton, "Château Monsigny comes to Isabeau from her mother, together with a very considerable fortune. She is the only living member of the family, though I hope there will be many more. I am only her trustee here."

"I suppose you have no one in view?" suggested Mrs. Marlowe; "no possibility as yet? It would be a very important marriage, would it not—the Monsigny heiress and a great beauty, too? One would rather be particular."

Lord Stratton hesitated. "Why," said he, after a moment, "I had intended saying nothing about it, and have said nothing to any one else, but I should be rather glad if Isabeau were to marry a young man who is coming here to-night. I have known him for two or three years, and I admire him more than any man I ever knew. He has no fortune and no title, though he will come into a title in a few years—an Irish one. But he is the sort of man I should pick for my daughter to marry. This man stopped with us once down in Mentone, and I think he and Isabeau were much taken with each other, though I gave them little opportunity to be in each other's company. I wonder if you have ever met him; his name is Beresford, Ashton Beresford. He has not been much in Europe for the past few— Why, what is the matter? Are you ill? Are you faint? Let me take your arm. It is the sun, I suppose; I should not have let you walk so long."

Mrs. Marlowe pulled herself together with a little shivering laugh, and covered her eyes with her hands for a moment.

"No," she said, laughing again, "it wasn't the sun; it was that wretched little lizard that ran under our feet. I have a perfect terror of them, lizards and snakes and all those crawling things. Don't be alarmed. Women have queer dislikes sometimes, you know, and—likes. What were you saying? Oh, about this young man, Mr.—Mr. Beresford?"

"Yes, Beresford," said Lord Stratton. "I am sorry about the lizard. I am afraid you will have a bad time, for there are no end of them about. They come out on the flagstones to sun themselves, you know. It is very curious to study peoples' dislikes. Now I have an entirely uncontrollable horror of dead things. The unexpected sight of a dead dog or cat or even a rat will give me a nervous shock that will last for hours, though I am not in the least a nervous man. My father is afraid of snakes, but not, I believe, of lizards; and with Isabeau, I think, it is spiders. Every one has some pet horror, and in nearly every case it is something quite harmless. Are you altogether recovered?"

"Oh, quite!" said Mrs. Marlowe. "It was very silly of me. And this—this Mr. Beresford?"

"Ah, yes," said Lord Stratton; "I was saying that Beresford had not been much in Europe recently. He had an unfortunate experience about five years ago that embittered him considerably, and drove him to traveling for distraction. I did not know him at the time, and can speak of the thing only from hearsay; but he became involved, I believe, in a rather widely published divorce case. A certain Colonel Travers named him in obtaining a divorce from his wife. I think the general impression was that Beresford was made a victim. Personally, I am quite sure of it, for I know him well, and he is not the sort of man to figure in divorce suits. I dare say his silence in the matter was to shield somebody, probably the woman. At any rate, I would trust him implicitly."

"I think," said Mrs. Marlowe, turning to look at the gray stone façade of the château, "I think—I remember something about the—affair. I had forgotten the names. Yes, I dare say your friend was innocent. I believe people thought so at the—at the time. Yes, I suppose it has embittered him. It was rather hard on him. There's the woman, though! It was harder on her than on any one else. Oh, poor

woman! No one pitied her, I imagine. They'd say it served her right; they always do. Yes, the woman had the worst of it."

"Pardon me," said Lord Stratton, "but I do not agree with you at all. Divorces are never granted against a woman in England without excellent cause. I am not an intolerant man, I think, but I have no sympathy with that sort of woman."

Mrs. Marlowe halted in her slow walk and leaned against the stone of the château, warm where the sun had shone on it.

"No," said she, with a little smile that seemed a trifle tired, "no, I didn't suppose you would have; no one has. And yet— Oh, well, let us talk about something more cheerful! How has Isabeau been since last Winter in Nice? What a beauty the child is! I wonder if she realizes how dreadfully cheap and commonplace she makes the poor little charms of the rest of us. I never saw another woman of just her type. That wonderfully pale hair of hers makes such an amazing contrast to her dark eyes and eyebrows and to her pink skin. Other women with that ashen hair have white eyelashes and eyebrows and china eyes, but Isabeau's eyes are purple. I wonder if she stains her eyebrows."

Lord Stratton laughed.

"Not unless she commenced in the nursery," said he. "They have always been dark. She is very like—like her mother." His voice changed a little, and the woman looked up at him swiftly. "Only," he went on, "her hair is almost silvery instead of golden. That is a debt she owes to a certain fifteenth-century ancestress, a Bretonne, Yves de Morlaix, who was carried off from her father's château by a Marquis de Monsigny and made a marquise. The hair appears every now and then, once in two or three generations, possibly, and, as a rule, in the women of the family. Yes, Isabeau is a great beauty. I suppose she is the most beautiful girl in Europe. The Grand Duke Michael was saying so only last Winter. And, thank heaven,

she is as lovely as she is beautiful. I do not think she is a coquette—that is to say, more of a coquette than any woman naturally is—and I know she is not vain.” He paused a moment to smile. “It is reasonably evident,” said he, “that I am a bit proud of my daughter.”

Then, all at once, he turned, standing at a little distance, and looked very gravely into the woman’s eyes. “It would be a greater pleasure to me than I can express,” said he, “if you and Isabeau should become fond of each other.”

Mrs. Marlowe flushed and her eyelids drooped. One of her hands rose uncertainly to the lace at her throat. “I—I don’t know—just what you—mean,” she said, very low. “I could not help loving that beautiful child, if I would. I am certain to become more than fond of her if—if ever I am thrown much in her—in her company. I am not so sure of her as of myself. I doubt if I am the sort to attract a girl. I have not had a very happy life, Lord Stratton, and I have lost all the girlishness I may ever have possessed.”

Lord Stratton moved nearer and took one of her hands in his, looking down into her eyes. “I am sorry,” he said, simply, and there was something in his perfectly earnest tone and in the quiet, rugged strength of him that lent a value to the trite words. “I am not an eloquent man,” he went on, “I am not at all good at saying things, but I should like to help you forget that you have been unhappy. It seems to me that fate is sometimes very stupid in bringing grief to the wrong people.”

“Do you think, Lord Stratton,” said the woman, looking up into his still face where grief had been and had left great scars and furrows, “do you think that one can forget? Do you think that one can put everything behind, and build a new life—oh, quite a new life?” There was a certain great wistfulness in her tone and in her up-turned eyes, a certain appeal as of weakness to strength, for assurance

and protection; and the hand that lay in his firm grip trembled a little.

“Yes,” said Lord Stratton, looking down with steady eyes, “yes, one may put everything behind but love and sin, for a great love may never be forgotten in this life, nor, I think, beyond; and a great sin must be expiated here below. But I think neither of these things have any part in you. Everything else may be forgotten. Will you not let us help you to forget? I do not like to think of you as suffering.”

Mrs. Marlowe withdrew her hand quietly and turned away, looking across the tree-tops to the west, where the sun lay yellow on the hills.

“Everything but love and sin!” said she; “everything but love and sin! I wonder if you are right.”

A bugle blew to the eastward, very thin and faint and sweet with the distance.

“Ah!” said Lord Stratton, “that must be Isabeau returning from her drive. The porter at the lodge blows a bugle when a carriage enters the gates. She will be here in a moment.”

They moved to the outer edge of the raised terrace and stood by the low balustrade, watching the avenue where it emerged from the gloom of the fir trees and swept across the open to encircle the château on its way to the stables beyond. After four or five minutes—for the avenue was long—an open landau behind white horses appeared and drew swiftly up to the broad steps of the terrace. Lord Stratton went down to assist his daughter and Madame de Brissal, her duenna, to alight.

Isabeau, in a very fluffy white Summer frock and hat, went up at once to welcome the visitor. Mrs. Marlowe gave a little gasp of sheer wonder.

“My dear,” she cried, “you are the most beautiful thing I ever saw in the world! You grow more beautiful every day. I’m afraid of you.”

“Oh, please, please!” begged the girl, distressedly. “It is—it is so good of you, so good! But I—I——”

“Stop flattering my daughter,” called Lord Stratton from the foot of

the steps. "You will make her vain, and then there'll be no living with her." He presented Mrs. Marlowe to Madame de Brissal, and told Isabeau to have the visitor shown to her apartments.

"Propriety has kept us out here on the terrace waiting for you for nearly an hour," said he. "Mrs. Marlowe will be thinking us heathen."

Then, when the ladies had gone inside and the landau had moved on toward the stables, he fell again to moving up and down the length of the stone-paved terrace, with his head bent and his hands clasped behind him and a deep crease between his brows.

About half an hour later he saw the earl coming up from the stables toward the château, and paused in his walk to wait for his father.

"Has that woman come?" the earl asked sharply, as he drew near.

"If you mean Mrs. Marlowe," said Lord Stratton, "yes; she came about an hour ago. It is not very civil of you, though, to call her 'that woman.'"

"I don't like her," said the old gentleman, gruffly. "I don't believe she is honest. I used to see her about, down in Nice, and her eyes are always scared. When you are a bit older you will know enough not to trust any one with frightened eyes. She is hiding something that she is afraid people will find out. What do you know about her, anyhow? Nothing!"

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Lord Stratton, with some heat. "I know, and you, too, know, that she was received everywhere in Nice, and there must have been people there who knew all about her. As for her frightened eyes, she has had an unhappy life; unhappiness leaves marks. I dare say she had a brute of a husband. If you must be suspicious, for heaven's sake don't pick out our own guests as objects."

The old earl gave an inarticulate growl and shook his head.

"Who else is coming?" he demanded, presently.

"The Lawsons and Mrs. Lawson's sister, Lady Eversham, were to have come," said the other, "but they were

called away to England at the last moment. Ashton Beresford is coming. He should be here in an hour or so."

"Ah," said the earl, in a tone of great satisfaction, "young Beresford! Now, there is a man I like. He is a very proper sort, indeed, for a mere boy. We shall be great friends. I was never entirely satisfied, at Mentone, as to which of us was the stronger. I am glad he is to be here. I shall make him stay a long time." And the old gentleman rubbed his hands and smiled in delight.

Lord Stratton halted, as if tired of his walk, and sat down on the broad stone coping of the balustrade. The crease had come between his brows again, and he stared off into the blue distance from narrowed eyes.

"Isabeau will marry some time," said he, in the tone of one who opens a discussion.

"Well," said the earl, "most people do. What of it? If only she would have the good sense to pick out some one like young Beresford, it would be an excellent thing, though she is not long out of the cradle."

"And I," continued Lord Stratton, frowning still into the blue distance, "I shall be left alone. I shall be very lonely."

"Lonely!" growled his father, "lonely! Nonsense! Am I of no account? I am not thinking of marrying or of dying, either—I expect to outlive you. Besides, we should come here often to visit Isabeau—if we liked her husband."

But Lord Stratton shook his head. "No," said he, "I should be very lonely. I have grown used to having Isabeau about, and I shrink from a life with no woman in it. It is no disloyalty to my dead wife, but I cannot bear the thought of being alone. I shall never love again—not greatly, that is—and I shall never forget; but I dread being left alone more than I can say. What would you think if I should marry again?"

The old earl halted before his son, and his strong jaw dropped in sheer

amazement. "Marry—again?" he cried; "you marry—again? Good God, you are mad! You do not know what you are saying. What should I think of it? I tell you I won't hear of it, not for a moment. Your brother has sons. I can't think what has brought you to such an absurd notion. Marry again, indeed!"

"Of course," said Lord Stratton, laughing a little, "the idea is new to you, and I am not altogether surprised at your opposing it, though as to forbidding, that is just a bit extreme, is it not? I am not exactly a child, you know. I am nearly fifty years old."

"Fifty? Nonsense!" cried the old gentleman, angrily. "You are a mere boy, and you are mad into the bargain. I tell you I forbid any such folly as you propose. I am the head of the house and I am your father. Let us talk no more about it. It is out of the question."

"By all means," agreed Lord Stratton, "let us talk no more about it. We have never quarreled seriously, and we must not commence now. I am glad you feel pleased about young Ashton Beresford's coming here. I remember that you two were great friends at Mentone."

The old earl paused a moment near the door of the château, and the keen eyes under their great white brows rested thoughtfully on the younger man.

"I should like to know," said he, "if it is this Marlowe woman who put such extraordinary notions into your head. If it is, you will be very sorry one day. I tell you she is not honest. She has frightened eyes."

II

THE Honorable Ashton Beresford arrived that evening barely in time to dress for dinner. Indeed, the ladies were already at their toilette, and he was received only by Lord Stratton and the old earl, the latter of whom exhibited a gruff warmth of greeting most unusual with him.

Beresford was not a handsome young man; indeed, he was almost ugly. But it was an ugliness that attracted rather than repelled, and the strong ruggedness of his face, irregular as it was, had no suggestion of coarseness. He was not quite so tall as the two men who were his hosts, being a trifle under six feet; but, as the Earl of Strobe had said, he was phenomenally strong, though he never made any show of his strength when it could be avoided. He was lean, like the earl and Lord Stratton, but dark-haired and gray-eyed. He had one feature that seemed curiously at variance with all his other outward characteristics, for his mouth, set in a strong, stern, uneven face, eagle-beaked and square-jawed, was the mouth of a woman, though he seemed by habit to have drawn its curves into a straightness and hardness unnatural to them. And this woman's mouth, so out of place over its jutting chin, was a sort of outward and visible symbol of certain very important elements of character and of temperament that were always at war with the man's nature, and that gave rise to some very interesting results, as such elements are apt to do.

The three men were standing in the great central hall of the château when the ladies came down to dinner. The great hall was in the oldest portion of the building, and, being a rather cheerless place was seldom used save on very formal occasions; as the newer wings, which had been from time to time added to the ancient pile, were far more comfortable. It was a very long room, comparatively narrow and of great height, arched over with stone in the ancient fashion, stone-walled and paved with flagstones of black and white, worn with age and sunken in places. There was a balcony at one end with mullioned windows behind and under it, and in the gray walls there were niches filled with marble busts of the Marquises de Monsigny.

In a long row, against one wall, the armor of all the heads of the house stood upon effigies, and their shields

and weapons hung above. At night the room was lighted by lamps that hung on chains from the high arches; but there was a row of clear-story windows far up near the roof, to let in the daylight.

A fire burned in the huge fireplace at one side, and before it the three men stood talking. But no fire could warm the great hall, even in the heart of Summer; it was chill and damp, and smelled of the grave.

"We have only one other guest," Lord Stratton was saying; "the Lawsons and Lady Eversham disappointed us. I hope it won't be dull for you. Mrs. Mar—" But just at that moment a servant parted the hangings from the arched doorway and the three ladies came down the room.

Beresford's gaze was fixed on Isabeau de Monsigny—she was always called de Monsigny, owing to the fact that she was the heiress of that house—and he had no eyes for her two companions. She was again in white, for she knew that it suited her to perfection, and her strange, pale hair glowed silver in the light from the hanging lamps. He thought that he had never in all his life seen anything so marvelously beautiful, and the blood surged to his temples and beat there furiously while he took her hand and looked down into her eyes, quite oblivious of the fact that he should first have greeted Madame de Brissal.

Lord Stratton was presenting his father to Mrs. Marlowe. That lady changed color under the glare of the old gentleman's piercing eyes and advanced a rather unsteady hand, which the earl promptly inclosed in a grip that would have crushed a block of wood. Mrs. Marlowe screamed.

"What is the matter?" the earl demanded. "Eh, what—what? Oh, I beg your pardon! Did I hurt you? Didn't mean to do that. Beg pardon. Don't look so frightened; your eyes are always scared. Nothing to be afraid of here, my dear, if you haven't done anything wrong. Don't look so frightened." And he turned impatiently to Madame de Brissal.

Beresford had by this time so nearly come to his senses as to pay his respects to the old Frenchwoman, whom he genuinely liked, and was inquiring after the well-being of a certain great Persian cat, which was, next to Isabeau, the pride of her existence, and which had been dangerously ill the Winter before in Mentone. But Lord Stratton took him by the arm and turned him about.

"Mrs. Marlowe," he said, "will you allow me to present the Honorable Ashton Beresford?"

Isabeau, who was watching young Beresford's face for reasons of her own, thought that a sudden slight spasm passed over it as he faced the other guest, that the lips drew very tight for a moment and that the eyes narrowed. Also, she was quite certain that he quickly withdrew the hand he had put forward, and she wondered if he could ever have known this woman at some previous time, or if she recalled to him something disagreeable. But if, for the moment, he showed any slight sign of emotion, it was gone at once, and his manner, as he made some civil and commonplace remark, was quite composed. As for Mrs. Marlowe, her bearing was so altogether self-possessed that Isabeau began to think she must have been mistaken and to call herself impolite names for creating drama where there was nothing dramatic.

They went out to dinner at once, and the earl offered some slight diversion during the soup by breaking a flower vase. It had been set too near his plate, and in attempting to remove it he crushed the strong glass in his great hand and spread a little lake of water out over the table.

"Dear me!" said he, "that was very careless. They really should not put fragile things about where I can get at them. I am so strong, you know," he apologized, mildly, and fell to muttering to himself over his soup in an annoyed undertone.

"You must not be surprised at grandfather," said Isabeau to Ashton Beresford, who sat beside her. "He has been rather low in his mind of late.

I believe you will cheer him up. He is tremendously fond of you, you know. I think he has never before met any one as strong as himself."

"I hope my strength is not my only recommendation," said Beresford.

"Don't be silly," said the girl. "As if your strength mattered—except to *grandpère*! Still, do you know, it's rather nice to be so strong. Aren't you glad you are? I don't think I could ever care—have much respect for a man who was weak. I remember once, down at Mentone, I came into a room and a wretched little Italian marchese ran to get me a chair. There was only one chair in view, and it was rather a heavy one. Would you believe it, that poor little man could not lift it? I had to go and help him. Why, I could have carried the thing myself. And then," she continued, pensively, "then the creature actually tried to make love to me—after all that!"

"Now, if I could only have been there!" said Beresford.

"Why—why, yes!" cried the girl, quickly. "You could have carried the chair, couldn't you?"

"Carried the chair?" said he.

"What else?" she said, looking at the table.

"You said he made love to you," prompted the Honorable Mr. Beresford, helpfully.

"I said he tried to," she corrected.

"I wish I'd been there," sighed Beresford.

The girl looked up for the smallest fraction of a second with a flash of purple eyes and a little, a very little dimpling smile.

"I think I wish you had been," said she.

"I am here now," he suggested.

Old Madame de Brissal was, after her fashion, delivering a placid monologue to the somnolent and wholly inattentive earl, and Beresford found himself watching the other two at the table. Lord Stratton seemed aroused to a most unusual degree from his habitual attitude of indifference

and reserve. He was leaning forward with his arms against the edge of the table, toward the woman who sat at his right, and there was an unwonted light in his deep-set eyes and a slight flush on his cheeks. He was talking in a tone of light banter—and when Lord Stratton descended to banter it meant a great deal.

Beresford sat watching the two under puzzled brows and then, as he turned with a start of recollection to the girl at his side, he saw that she also was looking toward the other end of the table and that she was frowning slightly and biting her lip, as if she could not make out the situation. He made some commonplace remark and she turned to him at once, but all through the rest of the dinner she was silent and distraught, and her eyes strayed often down the table, toward her father and the woman who sat beyond him.

It was a warm and very beautiful evening, with a moon, and a sky so clear that the stars seemed almost near enough to be touched with the hand, and the whole party went out on the south terrace for their coffee.

Directly before the terrace the avenue, broad and white in the moonlight, swept past on its course toward the stables; but across the avenue the ground fell away swiftly toward the little flat valley beyond, with its lagoon and its formally arranged shrubbery and grass-plots and paved walks. And in this steep bank, from which the earth had been cut away to make place, a great fountain had been set, backed by a sculptured wall of marble. There was a huge group of mermen and mermaids with dolphins playing about them, and the water spurted over them from the wall behind and from the mouths of the dolphins. Shrubby grew close and dark at the sides and hung over the wall from the bank above, and there was a long pool of still water, marble-curbed, which made an approach to the fountain. Beyond the pool terraced flights of marble steps and smaller fountains swept down to the plaisance below

and marble steps ascended in a curve on either side of the great fountain to the avenue and the south terrace of the château. From the plaisance the view of the whole, with the south façade of the château surmounting it, was very beautiful.

Mademoiselle de Monsigny set her little coffee-cup down on the tray and crossed to the outer edge of the terrace, where she stood beside the balustrade, looking down through the wide gap in the trees to the moonlit lowlands.

"Would you like to see the fountains in the moonlight?" she said over her shoulder to Beresford. "We think they are rather fine."

There was a gasp from old Madame de Brissal and a weak appeal as the two left the terrace.

"Not too far, Isabeau, *ma fille!* It—may be damp *là-bas*."

"*Pauvre tante!*" laughed the girl as they were crossing the avenue. "She is dying of horror at this moment. She has never forgiven father for bringing me up like an American girl instead of a French one. Father says that French girls are fools, and I believe he is right. All the French girls I know are fools, poor dears! Still, I'm all French myself, except in behavior. I'm all Monsigny."

They went down the curving marble steps and stood by the little oblong pool where the water splashed and purled and gurgled, and where very substantial, though somewhat moss-stained Nereids held off the over-ardent advances of their companions. The place was chill and smelled of dampness and rank vegetation and wet earth.

And they went further down, along the terraced flights of steps where there were no trees to throw a gloom over them and the smaller fountains tossed a lazy shower of diamonds into the moonlight, down to the great lagoon, still and black as a lake of ink, save where the moon was mirrored on it and the band of the Milky Way gleamed dim across its surface. Frogs croaked from the farther side and a

sleepy rook cawed in the wood beyond. A faint night wind, soft and cool and laden with odors, breathed in their faces and filmed from time to time the broad surface of the water at their feet.

Then, at last, they turned to look back, and all the great ascending stretch, with the château at its crest, lay under the moonlight, strange and beautiful like a dream picture. The girl stretched out her hand toward the great pile, where the moonlight drew odd, gruesome shapes among the gables and turrets.

"Château Monsigny!" she said, in a little low voice, and she waved her hand. "All Monsigny, everywhere that one can see."

"And all yours," said young Beresford.

"All mine," sighed the girl. "I think I'm a little glad and I think I'm a little proud and I think I'm a little scared, maybe. It's so much bigger than I am! It has been so important for so long and it has borne such men to fight for France and to do great deeds! I think I'm a little scared. I am the last Monsigny alive. Wouldn't you be frightened just the least little bit in the world if you were I, monsieur?"

"I am frightened," said he, "though I am only I. See what a coward I am!"

"Frightened, monsieur?" said she, in a soft, wondering tone; "of what, then?"

"Of you, mademoiselle," said he. "Do you wonder? Of you; because you are the most beautiful thing that there is in the world—so beautiful that I dare not look at you for long at a time, lest I should go mad; and because you are a great heiress; because all that one may see here in the moonlight is yours; because you are the last of one of the greatest houses in France. Ah, I have always been a little afraid of you and very much afraid of myself, ever since that first day when I saw you in Cannes and knew that a living woman could be like one's dreams. Did it never occur to you, mademoiselle, that men, all

men, must be afraid of you for these things and afraid of themselves?"

"Afraid of themselves?" she murmured.

"Afraid lest their madness make them forget to be afraid, mademoiselle," said he. "Do you see that great star yonder, the evening star? It is very, very beautiful, mademoiselle, and the air to-night is playing tricks so that the star seems near enough to touch, if only one were so mad as to put out one's hand; but it is only a trick of the air, of one's eyes. The star is thousands of miles away, mademoiselle, and so are you; and quite unobtainable, and so are you. One feels that—when one is not mad."

The girl's eyelids fluttered and rose for an instant and dropped again, and she laid one hand on her bosom that would not be still.

"It—seems to me such a—little thing of which to—be afraid, monsieur," said she, very low, and her voice faltered; "such a foolish little thing! What does it all matter? If I am—if I were, as you say, beautiful, why, the humblest, poorest child in France may be more beautiful. The head-gardener here at Monsigny has a daughter, monsieur, who is the loveliest woman I ever saw, more beautiful than one of his roses. Is that something to fear? And if I am heiress of Château Monsigny, and the last of my house, oh, monsieur! monsieur! am I less a woman? Listen! It is not wealth and beauty and state that you fear, you men, it is your own pride. It is not because a woman is in high place that you will not—will not reach out your hand; it is because you are not in higher place. It is because you would be always giving, in worldly things, as you would be always taking in love. Pride, monsieur, pride! You are afraid of a foolish pride."

"Oh, mademoiselle!" he cried.

The girl broke out in a little nervous laugh as if she would prevent him from speaking. "We—we must be going back," she said. "They will think we are lost—in the moonlight. Oh, we must go back! Come! And—

and, monsieur—" she laid her hand for an instant upon his arm and a little thrill ran through him from head to foot and settled finally at his heart, shaking him strangely—"monsieur, you will—forget that—that I have spoken so? I—it must have been the moonlight. It makes us just a little mad—sometimes. It was so very bold of me, monsieur, so very dreadful! You will forget? Think, if *pauvre* Madame de Brissal could hear me! Oh, *mon Dieu!* Think, if *pauvre* Madame de Brissal could hear! Come, monsieur, we must go."

But when they had reached the top of the bank above the fountain, she paused an instant under the sheltering gloom of the trees.

"Oh, monsieur," she cried, in a faint and breathless voice, "monsieur, I—would not have you—be afraid! Do not be afraid!" And she ran from him swiftly into the moonlight of the avenue.

On the great terrace only Mrs. Marlowe was standing beside the little iron coffee-table.

"My dear!" she called, as Isabeau came up the steps, "poor Madame de Brissal has been taken ill—one of her dizzy spells, Lord Stratton says. He wished me to ask you to come in to her as soon as you had returned. I hope it is nothing serious?"

"Oh, no, indeed," said the girl. "*Pauvre tante*, she has them so often! They pass in a few minutes. Yes, I will go in. Is father there? You will excuse me, Monsieur Beresford?"

She went quickly into the château, and young Beresford was left face to face with the other guest. He drew a deep breath.

Mrs. Marlowe set down her little cup on the tray.

"Well, Tony?" said she.

"Well?" said the Honorable Mr. Beresford.

III

"HAVE you had a pleasant walk, Tony?" Mrs. Marlowe asked, with a short laugh.

"Very!" said the Honorable Mr. Beresford. He had leaned back, half sitting against the marble balustrade of the terrace, near the iron table that held the coffee-tray, and the woman came nearer, standing close before him, so that she could see his face clearly in the moonlight.

"How pleasant, Tony?" said she, quietly.

The Honorable Mr. Beresford lowered his brows. "That does not—may I ask if that concerns you?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes," said the woman, looking into his eyes; "yes, it concerns me. Oh, it concerns me rather intimately." She bent her head for a moment and fingered absently the cups and spoons and silver things on the tray beside her. Then she looked up again into his eyes.

"It was—very strange, our being asked here at the same time, wasn't it? I didn't know you were coming. I didn't hear of it until after I had arrived this afternoon. You did not know about me, either, did you? I saw that you didn't when we met this evening in the hall. You have admirable self-control, Tony. You always had—too much self-control, almost. I should have screamed, I think."

"It was a rather bad moment," agreed Beresford, gravely. "Still," he went on, "now that we are here we must simply make the best of it, I suppose. As a matter of fact, I see no reason whatever for making the situation theatrical. We shall have to be a bit careful about concealing the fact that we—that we have known each other before; and that is all, I should think. Of course," he said, after a moment's pause and with an obvious effort, "of course, if you greatly prefer, I will go away to-morrow, back to Paris on business of some sort. I could arrange to be telegraphed for."

The woman looked up eagerly.

"Oh, if you could!" she cried, "that would be so much— No, Tony, you must not do that. I won't be so selfish as to allow you to do it. No; that is out of the question. Besides,

do you know, I am not at all sure that—that I am not glad you are here. I—it has been a very long time, hasn't it? Oh, Tony, Tony, my silly heart jumped when I saw you there in the hall! You looked so—so like you used to look!" She took a little turn up the terrace and back again, and her fingers pulled and twisted at the lace handkerchief she carried. Then she faced him again with a sort of defiance in her bearing and in her eyes.

"I—came here to Monsigny for a purpose, Tony," said she, in an altered voice.

"Yes?" said Mr. Beresford.

"I came here," said she, "to marry Lord Stratton—to make him wish to marry me. He does not know yet whether or not he wishes to marry me. In a week, or maybe less, he will ask me. I came here to marry Lord Stratton."

"Ah!" said Beresford.

The woman leaned forward, scanning his face very anxiously as if she sought to know what his quiet exclamation meant.

"I tell you," she cried, after a moment, "I am tired; I am worn out. You do not know what I have been through. I started in so bravely, Tony! I thought I could make a new life for myself. I changed my name for that of a cousin who had died and I thought I could put all that—that horror and disgrace behind me; but, Tony, Tony, I can't! It haunts me day and night. I never go out on the street or to a ball or into the casino at Nice or at Cannes or to the Opéra in Paris without quaking in a cold fear that I shall come face to face with some one who knew me before—before the—affair; some one who will call me by the old name, who will let the people I am with know who I was. Sometimes I do see them, the people who would know, and then—then—oh, Tony, the dreadful panic, the miserable subterfuges to get away out of their sight into safety!"

"Do you know what Lord Stratton said to me this afternoon? I was

asking him if one might forget troubles, an unhappy life, and make a new happiness for one's self, and he said that one might forget all, save sin and love! Oh, it isn't true, it isn't true! One *may* forget! It isn't true! I tell you I've a right to forget. It is monstrous that one's whole life should be ruined, damned for just one little year! I tell you——"

"Wait," said Beresford, sharply; "wait! What do you mean by sin and one little year? Do you mean that there was any truth in what was charged at the time of the action? Do you mean that Travers had a right to his divorce?"

The woman fell back a step away from him, stumbling slightly, and her hands flew to her mouth. Her eyes were very wild and she seemed not to breathe at all.

"No, no!" she cried, hoarsely; "no, Tony! no, I say! How can you ask such terrible things? You know there was no truth in it all. You must know it! What did I say? I never said that I had sinned. Tony, don't look at me like that! Can't you understand how I feel about it? You know what the world thinks of a woman who has been divorced. She is an outcast ever after. Is it so strange that I should come to think the same of the Mrs. Travers who is dead? She is dead, Tony, dead forever; but her ghost is haunting me always, till I am half mad. I say, you do not know what I have been through. Why, I have even been poor! I have to contrive wretched little makeshifts to dress decently, to make an appearance. I can bear it no longer, I tell you."

"You might have come to me for that part of it, as well as for the other," said Beresford, and his voice had softened.

"Ah, Tony," she cried, "I could come to you for neither. I had a little remnant of wretched pride left me and I made out, somehow. Had I not done you enough injury as it was? You were dragged into that—that disgrace and your name was sullied

along with mine. I know how you felt the injustice of it, Tony. You are the sort of man to feel such things; only, the world is more lenient with a man's honor than with a woman's. They have forgotten your part in it already, but they will never forget Mrs. Travers."

"If you had done as I asked at the time," said Beresford, "you might have been spared all this."

"Yes, Tony," said she, "if I had married you I might have been spared it all. Very often I have wished that I had married you. We should not have been happy, though. You did not love me, Tony. You offered to marry me because, in the world's eyes, it was you who had made the divorce possible." She put out her two hands on his breast as she stood before him and her face bore a little wistful, tender smile in the moonlight.

"I wish you had loved me then, Tony, when you asked me to marry you," said she. "You had loved me a little, before, but you would not speak. You tried to hide it because I was another man's wife. I didn't appreciate your love then. Ah, but I'd have treasured it later!"

"Do you—do you care for Lord Stratton?" asked Beresford, and his voice was gentle and low.

She shook her head slowly. "No," said she, "no; I don't care for him—not in the way you mean. I don't love him; but I am very tired, Tony, and poor and fagged out. I'm a ship that has had a stormy voyage and I'm sick for a port. He would be kind to me, very kind and tender and indulgent. I should pass my days contentedly, I think, happily, even. Ah, Tony, how I long for peace, security, a good strong arm to lean on! I should make him a good wife, honestly I should."

"And you'll tell him?" said he. But the fear came into her face and hurried her breath once more.

"Oh, no, no! oh, no, Tony!" she cried; "not that! no, I couldn't tell him. Do you think I should tell him? No, I could not. Listen; it

would only distress him, make him unhappy. Mrs. Travers is dead. Why dig her up again? No one need ever know. I swear to you that I should make him a good wife. What does it matter who I was five years ago? You'll not tell him yourself? You'll not ruin me, Tony?"

"No," said Beresford. "I shall not tell him. You know that. It is not my affair. Besides, it is not as if you had been the least in fault at the time of the—five years ago. A great wrong was done you. If you choose absolutely to bury it, it is no affair of mine."

"No," said Mrs. Marlowe, looking out over the tree-tops to the star-trewn sky, "no, it is not as if I had—been in—fault."

Then, after a little silence, she came and sat beside him on the coping of the marble balustrade, with her hands clasped on her knees and her face turned up to the sky. There was a soft reminiscent smile on her lips.

"Do you know, Tony," said she, "it wasn't all so bad, in those days, was it? In spite of all the horror and the shame and the disgrace, it wasn't all so bad. I had you. It was very good to be able to lay everything on your shoulders, to feel how strong and cool you were, to know that you would do all a man might do, and that you would never save yourself by hurting me. You held your tongue about many things to save me, when, by speaking, you could have cleared your own name, didn't you, Tony? Ah, no, it wasn't all bad! Sometimes, since, when I've been feeling very blue and very tired out and very lonely, I've wished those days back, terrible as they were, just because they held you." She turned her head away from him with a little nervous laugh.

"You'd be surprised, Tony," said she, "if I could tell you just how I felt this evening when I saw you again after so long. It brought back a queer great rush of recollections and—things, a queer great rush of them. Did it mean—nothing to you, when

you saw me, nothing but surprise? Had you forgotten—everything save that I brought a stain upon you? You—you cared—a little once, didn't you? Had you quite, quite forgotten, Tony?"

He made no answer, and the woman sat a long time silent, pulling and twisting at the bit of lace in her hands.

"Isabeau's a very beautiful girl, Tony," said she, at last.

"Yes," said Beresford, gravely, "she is a very beautiful girl; the most beautiful woman in Europe, I suppose."

"—and very rich," pursued Mrs. Marlowe.

"And very rich," he agreed.

"Will you marry her, Tony?"

"That is an absurd question," said Beresford. "I know Mademoiselle de Monsigny very slightly. I saw her for a few days in Mentone last Winter and I have seen her for part of one evening here. Your thoughts travel far ahead."

"Still, you would give your soul to marry her," said she. "Have I not watched you with her? And she cares for you, too. I could see that when she looked up at you during dinner. It is in her face and in her voice."

Mrs. Marlowe rose suddenly from her seat and began walking up and down in the moonlight with her hands pressed to her cheeks.

"Oh, I am a foolish old woman, Tony," she cried, in a low voice, "and I am very nervous; and I am a little mad, I think, for I cannot bear to see you with that girl. I cannot bear to see you look at her as you do, and to see her flush and smile and look up into your eyes. I cannot bear to hear her lower her voice when she speaks to you, as a woman does for only one man in the world. Do you think I am mad? I—I cannot bear it! Listen; you told me five years ago that the rest of your life was mine, to do with as I liked. You said that by some horrible series of blunders my name had been blackened forever and that you were held responsible for it, innocent though you were. You offered to marry me. You said you would

never marry any one else. Oh, are you going to break your word now?"

The Honorable Mr. Beresford rose to his feet, and his face was very white in the moonlight, very white and drawn and tense. "I have never broken my word in all my life," said he. "I offered, in all good faith, to marry you five years ago, and you refused and sent me away. I offer myself again in all good faith. It was through me, however innocently, that your life was wrecked, and to give you my life is the least I can do. I will marry you now, if you wish, though you know that I do not love you. I had no thought that you wished to hold me to my old promise, for we have seen nothing of each other in so long a time, and you had refused me once— But wait!" He turned on her with a puzzled frown. "How can you wish to hold me to my promise if you mean to marry Lord Stratton? I am afraid I do not understand."

The woman threw out her arms with a helpless gesture.

"Oh, Tony! Tony!" she cried; "am I a man, to feel and reason by logic? Have I not told you that I was a foolish old woman and nervous and overtired and a little mad? No, no, Tony, I must not marry you. We should not be happy together long, and you—you don't care any more. No, I must marry Lord Stratton; but—I cannot bear to see you with another woman; I cannot bear to think of your loving her. You will never understand, dear boy, because you are only a man. Oh, yes, I am a little mad. Don't mind me; don't listen to me. I'm mad and foolish and—and jealous; a jealous old woman who—who can't altogether forget, Tony—Tony, a jealous old woman!"

Just then Lord Stratton came out on the terrace.

"Madame de Brissal is much better," said he. "She has these attacks of giddiness rather often. They are not dangerous. I am sorry to have had to leave you. Isabeau will be out in a moment."

IV

WHEN Beresford came down the next morning there was no one in the breakfast-room. One of the servants told him that monseigneur and Milor de Strobe had just finished, and that mademoiselle had breakfasted very early, before any one else. Madame de Brissal and Madame Marlowe were not yet down.

He breakfasted alone and then went out into the Summer morning. The air was soft and fresh and cool and full of sweet fragrance, from roses in the gardens, mignonette and heliotrope and geraniums. And there were other goodly perfumes—the scent of firs from the grove that hid the avenue on its way to the gates, of damp earth and growing things from the fountains and the lagoon below; and over it all the wonderful clear freshness of dew not yet dried by the mounting sun. Birds cheeped and sang and rustled among the trees or under the shrubbery, and down beyond the stables somewhere a cow lowed.

"Jove!" said young Beresford, and took a great deep breath, "it's good!" And he went down out of the cool shadow that the house cast over the terrace into the sunlight.

The Earl of Strobe was coming up the avenue from the stables. He was in riding-breeches and an old shooting-jacket, and wore a very ancient deer-stalker's cap.

"Morning," said he. "Shocking hour to get up. When I was your age I used always to be up by six."

"Yes?" asked Beresford, politely. "I think I remember my father's telling me something of the sort about himself. He used to tell it me very often. I dare say that when I'm past middle age I shall say the same thing to all the young men I know. It must be a great comfort to be able to look back on an exemplary youth."

The old gentleman laughed and worked his white eyebrows up and down.

"You have no reverence for age,"

said he; "you are like all the other young people nowadays—only, you are stronger. I should really like to know which of us is the stronger. We shall have a good opportunity here to find out. You must stop a long time. Would you like to come down to the dairy? I have a calf there which I am lifting with my arms each day to test the truth of the old adage. They say, you know, that if you lift a calf each day from the time it is born you should be able to lift it when it is a cow. It would be interesting at least to find out when one would reach one's limit. My calf is quite a heifer now, but I can still lift it."

They went down the smooth, well-kept drive, past the stables, where a pair of English grooms were polishing harness in the sunlight, and through the dairy-houses to a small paddock. There two or three half-grown calves stood fighting flies in a patch of shade. The pasture beyond was dotted red and white with grazing cattle.

"That is the one," said the earl, pointing to a red-and-white heifer of mild aspect. He put a hand in the pocket of his jacket and the heifer came up to him expectantly.

"I should have said it was impossible for any man to lift that animal in his arms," said Beresford.

The old earl laughed. "I'll show you," said he, giving the heifer some sugar. He stepped to the animal's side and put both arms under its body, planting his strong feet well beneath it. Then he lifted it till its feet hung several inches from the ground. The heifer turned a mildly protesting face and licked his ear with a sugary tongue.

"By Jove!" said Beresford, "I'll do that or die in the attempt. Will you give the poor beast some more sugar?"

"I hope you will fail," said the old gentleman, chuckling. "I shall tell everybody in the house."

Beresford tugged desperately at the poor heifer and, much to his surprise, duplicated the earl's feat.

"Haven't you something really

difficult?" he inquired, loftily. "This is mere child's-play. I wish, though, that when the beast is full grown and you are still lifting it, you would ask me down here to look on. I should thoroughly enjoy seeing you embrace a large cow. There should be a certain humor in the spectacle."

The earl growled.

"What do you think of that woman who's stopping here?" he demanded, abruptly, as they were returning through the dairy; "that Mrs. Marlowe?"

"What do I think of her?" repeated Beresford, defensively. "Oh, I don't know. I've not had much of a chance to judge, have I? She is undeniably a handsome woman, and I should fancy that she might be an entertaining one. Why do you ask?"

"I don't like her," said the earl, with his accustomed frankness. "She has frightened eyes. She has done something bad some time or other and she's afraid of being found out."

Beresford laughed. "What a detective you would make, sir!" he said. "Now, I dare say the poor woman has merely had an unhappy life. Grief often makes a woman's eyes look like that. After all, the mere fact that she is a widow is reason enough."

"It's not grief," declared the old gentleman, stubbornly; "it is fear—I know fear when I see it. And what's more, I think she means to marry my son. That would be a great folly."

"It might be a great happiness," submitted Beresford.

"A great folly," repeated the earl. "The silly boy is afraid of being lonely in the event of Isabeau's marrying. As if he would not still have me! I don't like the woman. I should oppose with all my strength any such notion as his marrying her. I am going down to the lagoon to see about replacing a bit of loose stone. Will you come?"

"Why—er—thanks," said Beresford, "thanks; I should like to go, but I—I think I see mademoiselle up in the rose gardens yonder. Perhaps I'd

best just speak a word to her and join you a bit later."

"Oh," said the earl, "yes, yes; of course, of course." But he did not at once start away. He hesitated a moment, frowning absently under his great white brows.

"Old men have strange notions from time to time," he said, at last. "Sometimes they feel coming events rather oddly. I have a strong feeling that something is going to happen here at Monsigny—that there are events of moment afoot. I am glad you are here. You are more of a man than most men. I think something out of the common is going to happen and I think that woman will have a part in it." Then he turned away and went down the long slope toward the lagoon, his great shoulders swinging as he walked and his hair gleaming white under the old deer-stalker's cap.

Beresford stood looking after him thoughtfully.

"I should fancy that you are very likely right, sir," said he, under his breath. "The air is thick and air has a way of clearing itself. I wonder—" He had a momentary impulse to follow the old gentleman and, in spite of his promise of the night before, to tell him the truth, as he knew it, regarding Mrs. Marlowe and the lady's unfortunate past and his own connection with the affair, for he saw that the earl was very decidedly opposed to any idea of his son's marriage to the woman; he anticipated trouble and possibly unfortunate disclosures if it should come to a clash. But the habit of keeping his word even in the smallest matters and a natural distaste for meddling held him silent. He turned about toward the gardens with a little sigh. "Something is going to happen here at Monsigny," he repeated. "I should say that you are very likely right, sir." And he shook his head gloomily.

The rose gardens lay to the west of the château. There were hedges of box and of laurel about them, and down at the further end, for the great rectangle sloped gently away,

were rows of hothouses for forcing the flowers in Winter and Spring. On the side opposite to the avenue there was a small rustic Summer-house, open to the air but masked about by lilac trees, and a row of these lilac trees stood all along the high stone wall that shut out the cold winds from the north.

Beresford found a gap in the hedge and made his way in between two of the long straight rows of bushes that drooped under dew-wet rosebuds. The air was heavy with fragrance, almost stupefying. Some one in a soft white gown that clung to her when she moved, under a white hat that shaded all her beautiful head, stood still, up to the waist in roses.

"*Bon jour, monsieur,*" said some one, very softly, and made a little curtsey down into the roses.

"*Bon jour, mademoiselle,*" said the Honorable Ashton Beresford. "Do I intrude?"

"*Du tout, monsieur!*" said she. "We are honored, the roses and I. What have you been doing with my poor old *grandpère*, monsieur?"

"I have been lifting a calf," said Beresford, "a red-and-white one." There were choked sounds under the white hat.

"It is nothing to laugh at," he said, with dignity. "It is a feat. You couldn't have lifted the calf!" he boasted.

"Me! I couldn't lift even a wee little calf," confessed the girl, humbly. "It seems such a queer way to spend a morning, though, lifting calves. Do you always do it?"

"No, I don't," said he; "but your *grandpère* does, so you needn't be proud."

"Ah, well, I dare say the calf likes it," she conceded, handsomely. "I wish I could have seen you, though." And again she made choked sounds.

Beresford rudely pushed the rose bushes aside and came into the row where she was standing. She looked up into his face and the blood beat at his temples.

"I'm not—so afraid in the sun—

shine," he said to the purple eyes. Then he was granted an extensive view of the top of the great white hat. It was really a very handsome hat—as hats go.

"You—you have not said how you liked my roses," ventured the girl, after a little.

"Roses?" said he, "roses? How is one to say that one likes roses? They are very beautiful roses—I dare say they are very rare ones. I don't know anything about roses. The only thing I can say of them is that they make the properest sort of a setting for you. You—you belong among roses. Do you know what I mean? You—you look at home among them. Do you know what I mean?"

His eyes turned by chance to the upper end of the gardens, where a strip of green turf raised in a narrow terrace lay close under the walls of the château.

"Ah," said he, and at his tone the girl raised her eyes to his face and followed the direction of his gaze.

"Ah," said the girl, and her tone, like his, had changed.

"There is Mrs. Marlowe," she said, reluctantly. "I suppose I should ask her to come down and see the gardens, shouldn't I? One must be polite to one's guests, mustn't one?"

"I don't fancy you need bother just now," said Beresford. "Lord Stratton is coming out to join her."

"Oh, yes, yes; of course," said the girl, slowly. "Father is with her, isn't he?" And she looked, watching the two, as she had looked the evening before when she watched them across the dinner-table, somewhat puzzled and thoughtful and even disturbed.

"Shall we go over to the little Summer-house?" she said, presently. "The sun is growing warm here. It is cool in the Summer-house, cool and shady and comfortable, and one is higher up. One can see all the gardens."

So they crossed over between the straight ranks of rose bushes to the other side of the garden, where the

little rustic Summer-house stood among its lilac trees, under the cool shade of the wall. And Beresford said no word as they went, for the sight of the two people up at the château had quite wrecked his mood and had started his thoughts along unpleasant channels. He thought of what the old earl had said so seriously but a few moments before and he thought of the past evening and of how Mrs. Marlowe had recalled his old promise and had broken out in a fit of woman's jealousy because he had been with Isabeau. It could not be that she seriously meant to hold him to his word, that she meant still to demand all his allegiance. Her marriage to Lord Stratton, provided it went forward, must free him from all that. But what if she should not marry the viscount? What if the old earl should be able to prevent it, or she should determine not to go on with it? What if any one of a thousand obstacles should materialize? He would still be bound then! He had given her his life—what if she should refuse to give it back to him?

He clenched his teeth as he walked between the ranks of roses and said fiercely to himself that this was all nonsense. She could never take such an advantage! She was not that sort. What if she had given way to a little momentary spasm of jealousy—she had laughed at it herself. No, she was not that sort.

But, though he reassured himself very scornfully as his mind went over the thing, he could not rid himself of an odd discomfort, a premonition of danger to come. It was so, he thought, that the earl must have felt when he said that something was going to happen at Monsigny, something out of the common. And Beresford shook his head with a little sigh, for he knew that his happy, contented mood of the morning was gone beyond recall. There was a film over the sunlight and the rose gardens.

There were chairs in the little Summer-house, fashioned from gnarled and twisted branches, and a small rough

table placed at one side. They sat down by the railing and looked out over the splendidly kept gardens, with their ranks of rose bushes, and further down toward the hothouses, their beds and borders of other flowers, mignonette and fuchsias and pinks and blazing geraniums. There was a vine of climbing rose that mounted the side of the Summer-house and clung to the roof-posts, heavy with pink blossoms, and a spray of the buds hung by the girl's head, almost touching her hair.

The color, Beresford noticed, was exactly the color of her cheek and the texture, too, was like it. He thought of telling her so, but it seemed a very silly thing to say, even though it was true—very silly and very young, he thought, the sort of thing that one of the under-grooms might say to the gardener's pretty daughter, of whom Isabeau had spoken the evening before. He was quite out of humor with compliments.

The girl's eyes were still on the two people up under the walls of the chateau, and they were still thoughtful and disturbed, and when the two rounded the corner of the west wing and disappeared, she turned about to Beresford with a little sigh.

"I suppose it is very, very rude and very improper not—not quite to—like one of one's guests, isn't it?" she inquired, tentatively.

"Very," said he, by way of encouragement.

"And yet," she went on, "do you know, I can't quite like her—Mrs. Marlowe, I mean. I never could, not even in Nice. There's something about her—oh, I don't know." She looked away over the gardens, but Beresford could see that the color heightened the least bit in her cheeks. "Father likes her, I think. Perhaps I don't know her well enough. I think it's something about her eyes."

"Ah," said Beresford; "that is very odd."

"Odd?—how?" she demanded, turning back to him. "What do you mean? How is it odd?"

"Oh, nothing," said he; "nothing at all. I was thinking of what some one else said about a woman's eyes. Yes, as you say, Lord Stratton seems to like her; I—noticed last evening at dinner. Well, she is handsome, is she not? And she is probably very entertaining."

The girl looked up into his face with a certain diffident curiosity. "Had you ever met her before last evening?" she asked.

Beresford hesitated for the fraction of a second. "I do not remember," he said, carefully, "ever to have met any Mrs. Marlowe before. Of course, one meets no end of people and quite forgets them. It is not a common name, I should think, though hardly extraordinary. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing," said the girl, looking away again. "Last evening, when you were presented, I thought—just for a moment, you know—oh, nothing at all! Let us talk about something else. I really must not sit here discussing one of our own guests. What shall we talk of, monsieur?"

"There is you," suggested Beresford, dispassionately.

"No," said the girl, shaking her head; "I will not be talked about. We shall talk about you. Why have you turned, all at once, so grave and stern and—and bitter-looking, monsieur, with your lips all in a hard little straight line, so? A few moments ago, down among the roses, you were—you were—different."

"Ah, mademoiselle," said he, "that was in the sunshine and among the roses. It is shadow here. There is a difference, somehow. And I have been thinking of things—that were unpleasant. The sun does not shine everywhere, mademoiselle."

But the girl put out her hand with a quick little gesture and touched his arm. Her eyes were wide and distressed.

"Ah, monsieur," said she, very low, "come back into the sunlight. If the sun does not shine everywhere one may still go where it shines. I—I cannot bear to see any one unhappy or in—

trouble. Is it just black butterflies, monsieur, *papillons noirs*, or is it great trouble? Ah, I would have sunshine always for everybody! I should die without the sun, I think. Am I very, very foolish, monsieur?"

"No, mademoiselle," said Beresford, gently; "you are very, very wise, and it is only black butterflies, not a great trouble. See, they have passed already, the butterflies. Only, mademoiselle, when the sun does not shine some day, do not die, but wait, for it will shine again soon. Clouds do not quench the sun, they only hide it for a day. Where did you get your wonderful pale hair, mademoiselle? There was never any like it in all the world. And where did you get your purple eyes? You know, do you not, that they call you the most beautiful woman in Europe?"

"Then," said the girl, decidedly, "they talk very great nonsense, for I have seen many women who were infinitely more beautiful than I am. My hair is a great trial to me. It is tow-colored, monsieur; no color at all. I got it from Yves de Morlaix, who was an ancestress of mine, a Bretonne. Two or three others of the family have had it since. I do not like it; I wish I had my mother's hair, as I have her eyes. It is tow!"

"It is no such thing," said Beresford, indignantly. "Tow, indeed! It is the very soul of gold, with all the cheap yellow taken away, and only a creamy tinge of color left to make it warm and living. You should see it in the sunlight! Tow! Have you a portrait of this Yves de Morlaix?"

"Yes," said the girl, "though it is a very crude and poor one. Would you like to see it? It is in the west gallery with the others. There is a very beautiful portrait of my mother by Carolus Duran. I should like you to see that. Come, we will go up to the château now."

They left the Summer-house and went up through the gardens by a gravel path that ran under the stone wall. The girl carried a great armful

of long-stemmed pink roses that she had cut. They entered the west wing of the château and made their way through suites of high, splendid state apartments, shuttered and darkened, the furniture and mirrors covered with white linen, to the long picture gallery where the portraits of the lords of Monsigny and of their marquises and of their daughters hung in double rows.

Isabeau rolled the shades away from the skylight by cords that hung at hand and led Beresford to the portrait of Yves de Monsigny, *née de Morlaix*. It was, as she had said, a crude work and probably did scant justice to the charms of the Bretonne who had been won in so summary a fashion to the house of Monsigny. But with all its old-fashioned stiffness it was undeniably beautiful, and the painter had reveled in his depiction of the strange hair.

"Yes, it is beautiful," said Mr. Beresford, "but you took little else than the hair from Yves de Morlaix, mademoiselle. She was pale, while you have a very pink skin, and she had light eyebrows, while yours are dark, and she had a weak chin. May I see the portrait of your mother?"

"It is at the other end of the gallery," said Isabeau; and as they went along she pointed out three other women of the family with the Bretonne's pale hair.

"That one is Jeanne de Monsigny, who married a Duc d'Angoulesme," said she. "And that is Marie Charlotte, who died a week before her wedding day; and that is Amélie, who married a Marchese di Sant' Agata."

Then they came to a life-size portrait in a wide gold frame that seemed a window or a doorway, for the woman pictured there was living and breathing, smiling at one through the opening in the wall. She sat on a gray and gold lounge of the Louis Quinze style and she was leaning forward in her white silk gown, with one arm laid along the back of the seat and the other resting across her lap. She faced you, chin tipped up a

little, smiling. Her arms and shoulders were bare and there was a single pink rose half-opened at her breast.

Beresford stepped backward with a quick, smothered cry. Save for her yellow-golden hair the woman in the picture might have been painted with absolute fidelity from the Isabeau he knew. The likeness was amazing.

"You are all Monsigny, mademoiselle," he said, after a long time; "there is no Stratton about you." It was what the viscount had said to the old earl years before, as they stood one day on the south terrace and watched the little girl rolling about in the dust with her puppy.

"Yes," said she, "I am all Monsigny. They say I am very like my mother and I suppose it is true. I am going to the chapel now to put these roses on her tomb. I take them there every day. Would you like to go with me?"

"Thank you," said he, simply, "I should like it very much."

They went back through the great darkened state apartments and through many corridors with doors on either side, through what seemed to be the oldest portion of the château, and so into a little irregular court, flagstoned and surrounded on all sides by the crenelated and time-stained walls of the building. Gargoyles grinned from the eaves and a quaintly wrought pointer of iron stood out from one of the walls, throwing a finger of shadow on the sun-dial chiseled into the stone. In the centre of the court there was a very ancient well, long disused, with a curb of worn graystone and a rusted crank of iron for raising the bucket. Little brown lizards were sunning themselves on the curb.

They crossed the court and entered the gothic porch of the chapel. Ivy covered it almost completely and hung in festoons across the opening. The girl unlocked the heavy little door of oak and they went in.

Inside, the chapel was very cool, almost cold, in spite of the Summer warmth without, and the air smelled of incense and burned wax and of dry

decay. It was a gloomy place, for the few windows were of stained glass, heavy blues and scarlets and greens. From the little rose window over the doors, which faced the south, beams of light slanted down through the dim air and fell in prismatic lozenges across the flagstoned pavement and across the heavy pillars and on the sculptured tombs that stood on either side of the chapel. The hanging lamp before the altar gleamed a tiny red spark in the shadows, like a lighthouse very far away at sea.

And under the great stone arches at the two sides stood, bravely arow, the tombs of the lords of Monsigny, each with his marquise beside him. Their sculptured effigies in armor or in robes of office lay on the covers, hands folded, eyes closed, feet toward the nave, and a little scroll at the foot of each tomb told in phrases of sonorous Latin who each man was and the deeds he had done. Pray for him!

But there was one tomb that stood alone, with an empty space beside it. It bore no effigy on its cover, only sculptured wreaths and vines and flowers, and four little caryatides upheld it at the four corners. There was a cluster of living roses on the tomb, yesterday's roses, scarcely withered in that cool, dark place.

The girl took away the flowers, laying in their place the ones she had brought, and she bent her knee, looking toward the high altar, and knelt down beside the tomb and said a little prayer for the soul of her mother. Beresford stood near, by one of the gray pillars, watching. It gave him a curious and very sweet sense of intimacy to see her so, to feel that she had allowed him—indeed, of her own accord asked him—to come here with her. He watched the soft curve of her cheek against the dark, the gleam of her wonderful hair in the shadow—the soul of gold, he had called it—all the beautiful strong young lines of her body as she knelt beside the tomb, and a great passion of tenderness and of love took hold on his heart and shook him from head to foot, a great

passion of love such as comes to very strong natures only, and it swept away in its fierceness all doubts and fears and promises, all dangers and difficulties; a passion keen as physical pain and solemn as the ancient place in which he stood. He bent his head to it and bowed his shoulders in a sort of grave, awed wonder.

And when the two came out at last into the warm sunshine of the little court he was very silent, with a certain new look in his eyes that turned the girl's cheeks to a deeper pink as she met it.

V

ON this same morning Lord Stratton found Mrs. Marlowe in the breakfast-room, finishing her late meal alone.

"Oh, dear!" she said, plaintively; "I know this is a dreadful hour. I suppose all the rest of you have breakfasted long ago, but I am habitually lazy. I shall make no attempt to conceal it. I'm an owl, Lord Stratton; I like to stop up till unseemly hours of the night and sleep till an unseemly hour in the morning—if not till noon itself. Are you quite disgusted with me?"

Lord Stratton sat on the arm of a chair and smiled across the table at her the good, frank, hearty smile of a man who is usually grave.

"I am not disgusted at all," said he. "I am amused. You shall get up at any hour you like while you are at Monsigny. I dare say your passion for stopping up nights is the result of having been made to go to bed early when you were a child. I have known people who spent their lives in conscientiously doing all the things they were not allowed to do as children. They took a certain evil delight in it. However, if you will come out of doors with me I'll make you genuinely sorry that you were not up hours ago. It is a very beautiful morning."

They went out on the terrace and Mrs. Marlowe breathed in the fresh-

ness and the mingled Summer odors with a little cry of delight.

"I *am* sorry!" she said; "I really am sorry—but I expect I shall be quite as late to-morrow. An old woman doesn't change her habits easily. Oh, isn't everything beautiful?"

"You do not look an old woman," said Lord Stratton, laughing a little. "You look a very young one. I have been told that old women, or semi-old ones, dare not face the morning light. If I am a judge, the morning light becomes you."

"I am six-and-thirty," said she, "and that is old age. Don't flatter! You are such a grave and convincing person that one always believes what you say."

"Six-and-thirty?" said he. "God bless my soul, I am fifty!"

"Oh, a man!" scoffed the woman. "A man may be a boy at fifty. He is most certainly a boy till thirty, and sometimes later. But a woman—save us! she's different. Where does all this wonderful scent of roses come from? Are there gardens near?"

"There are rose gardens at the west," said he. "Shall we walk around the west wing of the château? One finds a very good view of them from close under the walls, for the ground slopes away."

They skirted the great west wing and came out on the narrow terrace of green turf. The gardens swept away from under their feet to the hot-houses that winked and shone in the sun far below.

"There is some one down among the roses," said Mrs. Marlowe; "two people. Ah, it is Isabeau and—*and* Ton—*and* Mr. Beresford." Her tone had changed very suddenly, but Lord Stratton was watching the two young people and did not heed it.

"Yes," said he; "yes, it is Isabeau and Ashton Beresford."

"He—seems very devoted," she murmured, and again her companion did not heed her tone.

"It is as I would wish," Lord Stratton said, presently. "There is

no better man. He shall have my consent if he can win hers."

"And," the woman questioned, "his old—entanglement, the story you told me of? You are—you are not—afraid?"

"No," cried the viscount, stoutly, "no; he is innocent of any wrong or of any meanness. I'll swear it. I know the man. He may be quixotic, but he would never be dishonest. They have gone on to the little Summer-house where it is shady. Come, shall we walk? Let me show you the fountains down below the south terrace. It is cool there under the bank. On the hottest days one may be cool there. Come."

They walked back to the south wing of the château and crossed the avenue and went down the curving steps of marble that disappeared ahead of them into a thicket of green shade, firs overhead, shrubbery and ivy beneath. So they came to the first terrace where the great Nereid fountain was, with its long still pool before it and its sculptured wall all stained and moss-grown behind. And they went in along the stone coping of the pool, near to the splashing fountain, and found a cracked marble seat overgrown with ivy.

The trees stood close together, and under them spreading shrubs. Vines and bushes hung from the bank above, making the place almost a grotto. It was dim and very cool, for the sun never came there, and the mossy earth under foot was black and damp. Through the vines and low-hanging boughs they could see, as they sat, glimpses of the formally laid out esplanade where it swept down to the valley and of the blue lagoon at its foot. Two or three men were busy at the nearer edge of the lagoon, repairing, it would seem, the stone margin. Among them towered the great shoulders of the old earl.

Mrs. Marlowe sank back in her seat with a little sigh of restful content and half closed her eyes.

"Ah, it is all so beautiful and peaceful and idyllic here, my friend," she

said, in her slow, lingering tones. "It is like old tales, romances of another day, a story-book Eden of marble and green things and antiquity and peace. It is like one's dreams of fairy-story castles. Yes, peace—peace beyond telling! I have not had much peace. Oh, do you not dread leaving it? Could you be happy anywhere else after this? I should think you would wish to imprison Isabeau in a convent to avoid ever having to leave Mon-signy."

The viscount leaned forward with his eyes fixed on the plashing water and the intertwined figures of the marble group. He chafed his hands together as he gazed.

"I should dread ever leaving Mon-signy, as you suggest," he said, slowly, "—indeed, in a way I do dread it—if it were not for—for a certain dream. I have of late been dreaming of—another sort of happiness, a happiness which does not depend on place or environment, which goes with one wherever one moves. I have dreamed—I wonder if foolishly—that my life is not yet lived, that there might still be much in it beyond an old man's portion of loneliness and oblivion. I am only fifty and I am not old for those years. I wonder—I wonder—I—" His voice stammered and trailed away into silence. He had been speaking very gravely and thoughtfully and low, as if quite to himself, and he seemed not to notice when he ceased to think aloud.

So, for a long time, neither of the two spoke; but the woman sat quiet in her place, pale and wide-eyed, with a certain very curious expression on her face, and Lord Stratton stared at the laughing Nereids and softly chafed his hands together.

Then, at last, a little restless movement and a sigh from the woman seemed all at once to arouse him. He sat up with a jerk, like one awakened from sleep.

"I—I beg your pardon," said he; "I—am very rude. I fear my wits were wandering. I have lived so much alone that sometimes I—forget." He

turned about on the old stone bench to see her the better and his face was very gentle and somehow greatly softened. It was as if he had grown, all in a few moments, much younger, had laid off the sternness and hard grimness that grief and time had carved upon him.

"A little while ago," said he, "you were saying that there had not been much peace in your life, and yesterday also you told me what, of course, I already knew in a vague way, that you had been very unhappy. Will you tell me something of your life? Will you make a friend of me? Believe me, I do not ask in idle curiosity. Sometimes it is a sort of relief to unburden one's griefs and sufferings to some one who is strong and safe and who cares to help one. I think you know that I—care greatly. I should like to make your life happier. Tell me, what has been such a heavy load of suffering upon you—for I think it can have been no ordinary thing. How long have you—have you been a widow?"

But the woman fell back in her seat, shrinking away from him, and her hands quivered and twitched, hiding her face.

"Oh, no, no! I—I can't! Don't—ask me anything!" she cried, in a choking voice. "I can't—speak of—of it. Don't ask me! don't ask me!" She had spent many hours during the past five years in preparing for just such an occasion as this. She had very often rehearsed what she would say and with just how effective a degree of womanly sadness she would tell the plausible story; but, curiously enough, she had almost never had occasion to refer to her past. It had been understood, everywhere she went, that she was a widow who remained inconsolable over the death of her husband and very few people had ever even mentioned her early life. So it was that she had fallen out of the habit of holding herself in hand, ready for the emergency. Also, the life of constant fear and dread that she had been through had sadly undermined

her strength, and now she found herself in a nervous panic quite beyond her control for a moment.

But she gripped her hands and set her teeth very fiercely, calling up all her strength to the need, and after a little was outwardly calm again.

"Please—forgive me," she begged; and her voice still shook. "I—I am not very strong and my nerves play me tricks—sometimes. What—is it you would know? My—husband? He died nearly four years ago. He—he died under—peculiarly dreadful circumstances—not disgraceful! Oh, not that! but very terrible. It was in—India. I did not—greatly care for him—not as a man's wife should care, but his—his death was a very great—shock. I—I try to think of it as little as—possible. I try to put all that—that part of my life—behind me—to act as if it had not been—do you not understand? Surely you can see how I—I feel! Ah, it was so dreadful, all of it—all of it!" She broke off, sobbing, and Lord Stratton laid one of his strong, quiet hands upon her arm.

"Do not say any more, I beg of you," he protested, and his voice was very gentle and pitiful. "I should not have asked you to speak of it at all. I—I did not know how painful it was to you. Do not think me guilty of mere curiosity. I have never been a curious man. I wished only to share the burden of your grief—to help you, if I might."

He rose from his seat and fell to pacing up and down the stone-edged margin of the pool, on the damp earth.

"I am a lonely man, Mrs. Marlowe," said he, gravely. "Even now I am lonely with my daughter and my father to keep me company, and one day I shall be lonelier, for my daughter will marry and my father will die. I said I had dreamed that my life was not done, that there might yet be more for me than an old man's portion. I wish to marry again and there is but one woman, among all those I know, whom I should choose. I have not the great, fresh love of a young man to offer her,

for no one may love twice as I loved Isabeau de Monsigny; but all my care and strength and tenderness would be for her. It may be that I could make her very happy."

He turned and faced Mrs. Marlowe. "You are the woman," said he; "you are the only woman I should even think of wishing to marry. Am I too abrupt, too plain-spoken? Alas, I am a very simple man! It is many years since I have had occasion to use words of love and they come awkwardly to my lips. I have no eloquence, no elegancies of wooing to offer you, but I think I can make your life happier, and I am very sure that you could make me young again. Will you marry me?"

Mrs. Marlowe had leaned back in her seat once more and her hands were pressed against her cheeks, but over them her eyes were very wide and sober, fixed upon the man's face. It had come earlier than she expected, his proposal of marriage, earlier even than she wished; for every woman, though she be a widow and has tasted great trouble, has yet in her a certain girlish coquetry, a certain instinctive reluctance to make her supreme surrender, even though that surrender be sweet to her. She had no intention of refusing to marry the viscount; indeed, as she had said to Ashton Beresford, she had come to Monsigny with the intention of marrying him; but now that he had spoken she found herself strangely unprepared, curiously unwilling to give him his answer.

She stretched out one of her hands toward him and he took it in both of his. "Oh, dear friend," said she, looking up into his face, "give me a little time to consider. You take me by surprise. No; see, I will be quite honest with you! I knew that it was coming, this. I felt that you would speak to me some time, but a woman puts off such things into the future. She is never ready to meet them when they come. Women are such foolish things! Do not press me to-day—give me till to-morrow. I wish to go off alone—oh, quite by myself—

and think. You have done me a great honor. I must not treat it lightly. Will you let me be alone for awhile? I think I shall take a long ramble over the fields and through the wood. I like to be out in the heart of nature when I have important matters to decide. Will you let me be alone? Do not wait luncheon for me. I may be gone some hours."

Lord Stratton bent over the hand that he held and kissed it.

"I shall wait as long as you choose," said he, gravely. "I shall not hurry you, though I must confess to a great impatience; your answer means a great deal to me, a great happiness or a great disappointment."

The sound of raised voices came up to them from the margin of the lagoon far below, made very faint and metallic by the distance. They turned to look. Two of the workmen who had been repairing the stone curb seemed to be having a most spirited discussion, enlivened by such gestures as only a Latin can accomplish. Then, in a moment, the huge figure of the old earl appeared from near by and seemed endeavoring to make peace. One of the fellows, who must have been greatly carried away by passion, would seem to have transferred his rage and his gesticulations to the new-comer, but the old earl's temper was somewhat widely celebrated. He seized the man by the throat with one hand and by his scarlet sash with the other, and, lifting him from the ground as one might lift a cat, threw him far out into the shallow water.

Lord Stratton laughed. "My father is not exactly a safe man to oppose," said he. Then, all at once, his eyes turned swiftly toward her face and were met by her own. It was quite evident that the same thought had come to them both.

"He will learn to love you when he knows you better—as any one must," said the viscount, gently. "He is a rather grim old man. You must not mind his odd ways. Now I must go.

It will seem very long to me till to-morrow."

He kissed her hand again and left her there by the fountain and went up the marble steps to the avenue above. There were some small matters to be looked after at the stables and he attended to these. After glancing idly into the dairy, he strolled back toward the château. He felt very restless, curiously ill at ease, and none of the many usual modes of employing his time seemed to attract him. His mind was on the dead Isabeau de Monsigny and on that life of twenty years ago. He could not rid himself of the thought, or call his attention to anything else.

It was probably the result of the scene through which he had just passed, the speaking again, after so many years, of words of love to a woman, the awakening of a long-dulled heart to responsiveness to a woman's voice and look and touch. He had said to Mrs. Marlowe that he was a simple man, and it was very true. There was no complexity in him. He was like the old earl in mind as in body, strong in likes and dislikes, plain of speech and single of view. He had loved Isabeau de Monsigny with a passion that was almost terrible in its single-hearted earnestness, and he had no thought that this new companionship which he sought should attempt to fill her place, or in any way be to him what hers had been.

Still, as he moved restlessly about the château on this day, the image of his dead wife persisted strangely in his mind and troubled him. He wondered if, after all, he had not been wrong in thinking of a second marriage, if there was not in it a certain disloyalty to the only woman he had ever really loved.

He found himself, heedless of how he had come there, in the little irregular sun-bathed court at the north of the château, where were the old well and the sun-dial and where gargoyles with heads of beasts or of devils or of monks grinned hideously from the weather-stained eaves. He

crossed to the ivied chapel and entered by the heavy little oaken door. The gloom and the incensed coolness of the place, the bars of colored light from the windows, the ancient stillness, seemed very good to him—restful and soothing.

He went and stood in the dim shadow by the tomb of Isabeau de Monsigny. It was covered with fresh roses of the deep pink that she had loved, and he knew that the younger Isabeau must have laid them there that morning. He knelt beside the marble tomb and laid his arms out across its top, bowing his face on them, and twenty years were rolled away like the rolling up of a curtain that masks the stage.

He was back again in those cruel, bitter days when the marble tomb beneath his arms was white and new, when all the world was a pall of cold horror and life was ashes in the mouth. He had been wont to come here very often then, in the first keenness of his grief—to come when all the servants were asleep and there was no one to spy on him—and spend the night communing with her, as if she could hear through that heavy carven slab of stone.

It came back to him for an instant with a great rush of agony, a tidal-wave of bitterness and impotent rage at fate, and the sense of utter solitude; but he took firm hold on himself with all his great, calm strength and shook it off, knowing that it was only a moment's breakdown of the nerves.

"Sweetest," he said, aloud, "I wonder what you would have me do. I wonder what you would say if you could speak to me. If only you could speak to me! Sometimes I cannot bear the thought of any one taking your place in any respect. It is revolting. But she will not take your place, my queen. She will only bear me company as I grow old—you understand, do you not? I cannot love again and I cannot forget, and when I am dead they will bring me here and lay me beside you as we agreed so long ago. But I am very

lonely, Isabeau, very lonely! You would not begrudge me comfort and a woman's care?" His voice echoed and rang in the dark, empty place, but he did not heed it, for he was very greatly in earnest. It was like him to come here to consult, as it were, with the dead woman whom he had so loved. It was like his simple directness in all things.

"Show me some sign," he begged, still aloud. "Give me some signal if you think I am doing wrong, if you think it disloyal to you. Oh, Isabeau, she will never take your place. I shall never love again as we two loved." And so he went on speaking, arguing all the matter, as if the woman heard in her marble tomb, till after a very long time his voice died away and he dropped his face once more on his outstretched arms, crushing the fresh pink roses that she had loved.

VI

BUT Mrs. Marlowe, when Lord Stratton had left her, sat for nearly an hour very quiet and still by the splashing fountain and looked out over the terraced esplanade below her, with the broad lagoon at its foot, to the wood and the blue hills beyond; so quiet that after a time a frog climbed out of the pool and sat upon the stone curb blinking at her, and birds fluttered down from the tangle of shrubbery to hunt for worms in the damp earth under her feet.

Below, at the edge of the lagoon, the earl lingered a few moments, giving directions with emphatic nods of his strong white head. The woman shivered involuntarily as she watched him, this terrible old man with his uncanny strength and his fierce, piercing eyes that seemed to see the nethermost corners of her quaking soul. She was genuinely afraid of him and she had a strange feeling of certainty that he was destined to work her ill. She shivered again as she recalled to mind his throwing the

man into the water and Lord Stratton's laughing remark that his father was not exactly a safe man to oppose. She was quite sure that the earl would oppose his son's marriage to her and the thought of his antagonism filled her with an unreasoning terror.

But presently the earl went away and all but one or two of the working-men also went away, and she fell to thinking of Lord Stratton's offer and of the life that might lie before her if she should marry him. There would be peace and quiet and rest, an end to this life of fear and penury. Happiness might come, it seemed to her, for she knew that Lord Stratton would be very kind, and, indeed, she felt that any release from the life she had led would be happiness.

They would live very quietly, she said to herself, sometimes here at beautiful Monsigny, sometimes at Strobe Manor, though as little as possible, she thought, in England. There would always be danger there, the danger of recognition, and she was very firmly determined that Lord Stratton should never know about her past. Yes, he would be kind to her, she was certain of that, kinder than most men, and very thoughtful, and he would not demand too much, for he was not a young man or demonstrative. And, sitting there in the cool shade, she made a solemn vow to herself that she, on her side, would be everything to him that a woman could be, that, in return for the many things he was offering her, she would use every means in her power to make him happy and contented.

"I can make him happy," she cried, softly, to the birds and to the blinking frog and to the marble Nereids. "I know that I can make him happy, and I will! I will spend all my days, all my thought and strength in trying to make his life good to him. I shall be all he has, for of course Isabeau will—" Then, all at once, she halted with a catching of the breath and something took hold of her heart and wrung it.

"Isabeau will—marry—Tony Beresford," she whispered, slowly; "she will marry—Tony." She sprang to her feet with a little low cry that sent the birds and the inquisitive frog back to their coverts in a panic. Her hands shook and clenched at her sides and her face quivered.

"She sha'n't marry him!" cried the woman, fiercely; "she sha'n't marry him! It would drive me mad to think of them—of them as married! He swore that I should have all his life. He is breaking his word. Oh, I dare not think of them as married! I dare not!" She dropped back into her seat with her face in her hands, sobbing.

"Tony! Tony!" she cried, in a whisper, "you must not do it. I've borne a great deal from the world. I can't bear any more. To see you forget—together, to see you making love to another woman, to see her listening, to know what you are saying to her when I cannot hear, to think of you—of you as married to her—oh, Tony, I can't bear it!"

"I suppose I am a wicked woman," she said, after a long time, dropping her hands listlessly into her lap and staring out again to the blue hills; "I suppose I am a wicked woman. I have nearly wrecked a man's life—a man whom I—I loved, and now I wish to wreck it altogether, just for—jealousy—" her hands clenched again instinctively and she caught her lips between her teeth—"a jealousy so fierce that it burns me when I think of it, sends little dagger things all through me! I'd—oh, I'd commit crimes rather than let you marry that girl, Tony! I'd do anything, anything. It frightens me to feel so, to know that I've so little control over myself. Ah, Tony, Tony, this love, it's a strange thing! And women are queer cattle, aren't they, boy? They'll do more for their love than you men. I am a wicked woman! I had not known how wicked. I've tried so hard not to be! It isn't that I wish to be bad, but there's something goes mad inside me when I think of your loving any one

else. Oh, why did I not marry you years ago, Tony? Maybe we should have been happy together. I think not, but maybe we should have been." And she fell to staring out into the distance, with her hands clasping and unclasping and twisting about each other on her knees.

But that evening after dinner, when Beresford and the old earl took their cigars down on the avenue and walked back and forth in the moonlight where the cool night breeze blew across their faces, Mrs. Marlowe and Lord Stratton lingered beside the little coffee-table on the north terrace.

"I told you, Lord Stratton," said she, "that I would give you my answer to-morrow. I think I will give it you now, for I am quite decided. I went off alone to-day to think it over, to look at it from every point, and I made up my mind to marry you. You say that you are a lonely man and I think that you know I am a lonely woman. We are neither of us very young and we have not a great young love to offer each other, but I honestly think we could be happy together, very happy and very contented, for I know that you would be infinitely kind to me and I—oh, I should do everything, everything that a woman could do to make you a good wife. I will marry you whenever you wish it, Lord Stratton."

The viscount moved toward her swiftly, with a little impulsive boyish cry of gladness; but she put out her hand, laughing softly, to check him.

"Perhaps it would be better," she said, "not to—to tell the others quite yet, to let them come to know me better. It will look so very sudden, will it not? They will be so unprepared."

"That shall be as you like," said he; "but I think I ought soon to tell my father. He—he may be a bit difficult to win over. He does not like the thought of my marrying again. Shall we join them down there in the avenue? We have none of the moonlight here."

They went down where the two men were walking, and all four strolled

slowly back and forth on the smooth white drive. Lord Stratton had, by chance, placed himself beside the old earl, so that Mrs. Marlowe walked with Ashton Beresford.

"Let them go on a bit ahead, Tony," she said, in a low voice; "I wish to talk to you—so! Ah, that is still better." A groom had approached the two men, coming from the direction of the stables, and evidently wished them to return with him, for they turned half about, waving their hands toward Beresford and Mrs. Marlowe, and set off briskly with the servant.

"Now, come down below, by the fountains," she said. "It is like daylight here."

There was a certain air of subdued excitement in her manner; but when they had descended to the lower terrace and stood in the shadow by a stained old marble balustrade, waist high, where, leaning, one looked down on all the moon-bathed loveliness of the esplanade and the still lagoon, she seemed at a loss for words and a curious shyness came upon her.

"I—I saw you this morning in the gardens with—*her*," she said, at last.

"Ah!" said he, pleasantly. "Oh, yes, yes, I was there. And I saw you up by the house with Lord Stratton."

"Well, what of that?" she demanded, with a little sharpness in her tone.

"What of it?" said he. "Why, nothing of it at all; nothing more than of my being with Mademoiselle de Monsigny. Why did you feel called upon to mention that?"

But the woman made a quick little gesture in the dark.

"Ah, we must not quarrel, Tony," said she. "We must not quarrel unless—unless we have to; not over little things, anyhow. Listen, Tony! I took a very long walk to-day all alone, because I wished to think out some things, decide them—fight a bit, maybe, with myself. And I came to a certain conclusion about—about you and me. I tried to have it otherwise—oh, I fought hard, but—I'm only a woman, after all. Women are weak in some

ways. Perhaps I'm weaker than other women. I have not been very happy. Ah, well, it's this—I won't give you up, Tony, I can't give you up. You—you must not marry that girl, or, if you are honorable, make love to her, make her care for you. You made me a promise long ago. You gave me your life. Well, I refuse to give it back. That is all. I hold you to your word."

Beresford took a deep breath and in the dark she heard the strong muscles in his arms and shoulders crackle gently as he took fierce hold on himself and held himself rigid.

"Yet you intend, I believe, to marry Lord Stratton?" he said, in a very quiet tone.

"I promised this evening to marry him," she said, carelessly. Then, all at once, when it was too late, she caught herself up sharply with a sudden gasp, for she had meant not to tell him of her engagement till she had wrung some sort of a promise from him. Her mind was so intent on the main line of her thought that the words had slipped out before she realized what she was saying.

"Ah," said young Beresford, slowly, "that would be a rather strange thing, would it not, your holding me to such a promise, though for five years you have quite ignored it and only yesterday refused to marry me—the while you were betrothed to another man? You are a curious woman, Margaret."

"I don't care! I don't care!" she cried, tensely. "You may call me what you will and think of me as you will; I'm as contemptible as you choose to think me, but I cannot bear your making love to another woman! I would do anything, commit crimes, lie, anything, to keep you from it! Oh, Tony, Tony, have you forgotten so completely? Is there nothing in me of the woman you—you used to—love? Yes, yes, you did! you did, if it was only a little! I knew it, I could see it! Am I not the same woman, Tony? Have I grown so old, so ugly that there is nothing sweet in me now? Tony, you can't have forgotten!" She

stretched out her white arms to him along the balustrade and her voice shook in the beginning of little sobs.

Beresford saw that her arms, where they had touched the rail of the balustrade, were covered with bits of earth and little twigs and dust that soiled the white skin, and he took out his handkerchief and brushed them clean, with an exclamation of disgust. It made him think of something he had seen two or three years before in Africa. The hut of a Belgian trading agent had been looted and his wife and children killed. Beresford had been the first of the relief party to enter the door next day and had found the woman lying on her face on the floor. She had been dragged by the hair some little way and her arms and one shoulder and the side of her face were smeared with earth. It had seemed to him more horrible, this disfiguring of the white, smooth flesh, than the actual wounds, and he had never forgotten it.

"I do not think you know what you are saying," he declared. "You are about to marry another man. Surely that releases me altogether from my promise. You have had a very exhausting day, Margaret, and you are a bit nervous and hysterical. Shall we not leave all this till another time?—if, indeed, it must be spoken of. Of course, what you have been saying is quite out of the question."

"It is not out of the question," she cried, "and we will not put it off till another time. I definitely hold you to your promise."

"And I," said Beresford, "definitely refuse to be held under such conditions. It is altogether absurd. What in heaven's name are you going to do with me after you are married?"

"I won't release you!" she cried again, as if she had not heard him. "I tell you I cannot bear it. I have your promise and I won't release you!"

"It is war then?" said he; "war, Margaret? I have the better hand, you know, if I choose to show it. No, no, do not let us be absurd! You have your coming marriage to think of.

Do not try to interfere with me. Your engagement leaves me quite free to do what I will with my life."

But the woman came close to him in the dark, looking up into his face.

"Don't try me too far, Tony," she said, in a little, strained, shaking voice; "don't try me too far! I warn you, you will be sorry. I—I told you that I should do anything, say anything, lie, commit crimes, to keep you from marrying that girl, and I will if you refuse to listen to me. Ah, Tony, I am not responsible for myself when that jealousy takes me by the heart; I go almost mad. Take my warning, please, please, I beg of you. Don't drive me desperate. Oh, I know how absurd it all seems to you. You're only a man and you do things by reason. Women don't reason, Tony; they feel. I shall do something dreadful if you don't listen to me!"

Beresford made a short exclamation of impatience. He saw that the woman was becoming hysterical and, like all men, he hated scenes.

"Come," said he, "we must be going back. It will look very odd, our disappearing so. We will talk this over to-morrow. Nothing can happen before then, you know."

They went back silently up the steps and out on the avenue. There seemed to be no one on the terrace, but the two men were just coming up the drive from the stables.

"It was a horse that had fallen in its stall and injured a leg," said Lord Stratton to Beresford as they met. "The grooms were a bit anxious, as the horse is a valuable one. I dare say it will come out all right. I am sorry that we had to leave you."

The old earl had placed himself beside Mrs. Marlowe, apparently in a somewhat tardy attempt to make himself agreeable. They walked on ahead of the others and after a turn or two mounted the steps of the terrace to sit down, while Lord Stratton and Beresford continued their stroll back and forth in the moonlight.

Then, in five or ten minutes, Mrs. Marlowe rose and went into the châ-

teau, and presently Beresford, seeing that Isabeau was not likely to appear, excused himself to write a letter that must be sent by the early morning post.

Lord Stratton mounted the steps of the terrace and sat down opposite the old earl, who was pouring himself a fourth cup of black coffee.

"I am going to marry Mrs. Marlowe," said he. "I know you will not be pleased, but I am a very lonely man and I want a woman's care. I am going to marry Mrs. Marlowe."

"You are not," said the old gentleman, briefly; and he poured a little cognac into his coffee.

"I say I am," declared the younger man. "She is a good woman and an attractive one. I think she will be a good wife. I think I shall be much happier married to her. She knows that I can never forget—Isabeau, and she will not expect a boy's passion. She will not expect to be to me what Isabeau was, but I think we shall be happy. After all, your opposition is more because the idea is new to you than for any other reason. You always oppose a thing until you have had time to grow accustomed to it."

"I do not believe that she is a good woman," said the earl, ignoring the reference to himself, "and I do not believe you would be happy together. What do you know about her, anyhow?"

"I know that she is a widow," said Lord Stratton, "and I know that she has had an unhappy life. Further than that, I know that she is accepted in the best houses at Nice and Mentone, and even in Rome."

"Nice and Mentone!" cried the old gentleman in disgust. "Who knows anything about anybody in Nice and Mentone? And who is not received there? Your butler might set up for a baronet anywhere along the Riviera and no one would be the wiser. Who knows anything about this woman's husband?"

"He died in India four years ago, as I told you this noon," said Lord Stratton.

"He did not," said the earl. Lord

Stratton uttered a little exclamation of impatience; then he laughed, for he was used to his father's ways.

"When you told me this noon," continued the old gentleman, "that Mrs. Marlowe's husband had died in India I thought it very strange, for I remembered distinctly how Lady Eversham had told me in Nice that the man died in America—Mrs. Marlowe had told her so. No, it could not have been a mistake. Lady Eversham is the most painstakingly accurate woman I ever knew—too much so, altogether. I say I thought it very strange and so this evening, a few minutes ago, I asked Mrs. Marlowe something about her husband, leading up to it in some gradual way, I have forgotten how——"

Lord Stratton could not resist a short laugh. He knew something of the earl's "gradual" leading up to a subject.

"I told her that I had heard that he died in America, and at first she said yes; then she became very confused and nervous and said no, it was in India, and that she was with him at the time. Now, I have been three times in India, as you know, and I asked her enough questions to make it quite clear that she had never been there. She lied about her husband's death and lied very stupidly, too. She could easily have made up a better tale. I say, as I have said before, she is not to be trusted. She has done something very bad and she is afraid she will be found out. You shall not marry her, anyhow, till we know much more about her earlier life. I dare say she never had any husband."

"That is quite absurd," said Lord Stratton, warmly. "What you say is certainly odd, but I have no doubt she can explain it and I have no doubt that she will, at the proper time. Anyhow, I won't have my guests cross-examined and frightened. You probably frightened her till she did not know what she was saying. We shall find out all that is necessary, you may be sure. You are too suspicious."

"Where is Isabeau to-night?" asked the earl, after a period of silence.

"With Madame de Brissal," said Lord Stratton. "She said she would be down later, but I suppose madame was restless and Isabeau could not come away. That is why Ashton Beresford went in so early, I suppose, because she was not here. I think they are greatly taken with each other."

"I am very glad," said the old gentleman, heartily. "He is a man and men are rare in this generation. I think he will make a good husband. He is not the light-minded or fickle type. He is almost as solemn as you or I. What was the trouble he got into a few years ago? I have forgotten."

"A divorce case," said Lord Stratton. "Colonel Travers—'Sudan' Travers, you knew him—got a divorce from his wife and named Beresford. No one believed that Beresford was in fault, except Travers, I suppose. Beresford took it hard. It bowled him out seriously, I fancy. Queer case, as I remember it. Beresford shut up very oddly about a number of things that were charged. They had witnesses who swore to seeing Beresford about at places with the woman—hotels and the like. I don't believe it was true, but he would not deny it, I remember. Shielding the woman, I dare say. Probably there was another man in the business. Anyhow, I would trust the boy absolutely. You would, too, I think. Should he wish Isabeau he shall have her, if she cares for him, and I think she does."

The old earl rose, laying down the end of his cigar, and nodded his white head to the moon.

"I was telling Beresford this morning," said he, "that something was going to happen here at Monsigny—something out of the common. I feel it more strongly than ever to-night. Something strange is going to happen. I wonder what it will be. Of one thing I am sure. That woman with the scared eyes will have a part in it. I tell you she is not to be trusted."

VII

THE next two or three days passed, for every one at the château, under a pall of vague unrest. The air seemed charged with premonition, heavy with a sinister foreboding of ill, and all waited, ignorant of what was to come but certain that something impended. The earl's discomfort seemed to have become contagious.

Mrs. Marlowe and Lord Stratton were together during a great part of the day, but the woman was moody, full of strange whims, full of little bursts of affection and unexplained coldnesses, given to long fits of silence. Lord Stratton was frankly worried. He had again opened, with much delicacy, the old subject of her husband's death and she had told him a story of some length, with no sign of nervousness, about the occurrence, dwelling on its unusually horrible circumstances and her consequent dread of even recalling it to mind. But even to Lord Stratton's simple and unsuspecting ears the tale rang false and unconvincing. He would not, for the world, have admitted to himself that he did not believe it, but it troubled him greatly. He took to spending much of his time in the ancient chapel, alone in the dim shadows with the wife of his youth, and he prayed earnestly, as only strong and simple natures may, for light and for guidance and for peace of soul.

But the woman whom he meant to marry, left thus alone, would wander off across the fields and through the wood for hours together. She made, in those days, alone with the blue sky and the clean sweet winds and the teeming earth, as brave a fight against hopeless odds as ever any one made. She was not, as she had so often despairingly cried out, a bad woman by nature or by choice, but she was stabbed and burned by a devil of jealousy against which her frail strength was altogether helpless, a devil whose unsuspected fury frightened and awed her. Under its influence every normal feeling, every generous and good im-

pulse, fell away, till she was ready to use any means to gain her ends.

Young Beresford, too, seemed visibly affected by the spirit that was everywhere about Monsigny. He had spent a nearly sleepless night after his last interview with Mrs. Marlowe on the lower terrace and he realized, though probably not to full measure, that a woman so fiercely and unreasoningly moved by jealousy might be capable of going to any extremes. So he went about gloomily, like the others, fearful of he knew not what, and avoided Isabeau as much as he could. He spent the greater part of his time with the old earl, to that gentleman's huge delight. In the morning they conscientiously lifted the red-and-white heifer, which accepted its double indignities with patient resignation, and during the day they rode or tramped over the estate, superintending the necessary repairs and the gardening and forestry.

But the girl went about her usual routine very silently, making no comment; only, she seemed to grow a little pale and very sober and her eyes, when they met Ashton Beresford's, were shadowy and bewildered and full of a strange questioning pain that caught at his heart and tore it.

Once—it was toward the week's end—she met him alone in the avenue; he was on his way to the stables to join the earl and he could not avoid stopping to speak to her.

"You—you have not seen the roses of late, monsieur," she said. "You—liked them once. You have forgotten them, monsieur? You do not care for roses any longer?" And she looked up into his face with a little sad smile.

"Oh, mademoiselle," said he, "how could they help being beautiful as ever, the roses, with the care they have? And how might a man forget them, mademoiselle?"

The girl laughed, softly, eagerly. "Ah," said she, "that sounds like the—like the old times, monsieur, before this—this strangeness came upon us all here. What is it, monsieur? What is it, this thing that hangs over

Monsigny? I—I am cold always—" she drew her shoulders together with a little shiver—"and my heart, it is heavy as stone. Father goes about so silent and gloomy, and Mrs. Marlowe, too. And you, monsieur, you are always with *grandpère*, sad and sober. Ah, what is it that has come to us?"

Beresford smiled down into her face, but his heart beat fiercely.

"Black butterflies, mademoiselle," said he; "clouds in the soul. But clouds pass always and there will be sunshine soon again—there shall be! Alas, I do not know what has come upon us all! The earl says that something is going to happen. It may be so. But clouds pass, always, always. Oh, mademoiselle, do not look so sad; I cannot bear it! I—" He caught himself up very quickly, for his voice was shaking and his arms were going out toward her.

"Come and ride with us," he said. "The earl and I are going for a long ride. We will wait while you change your things."

The girl laughed eagerly, with some of her old-time joyousness.

"Have them saddle my horse," she cried. "I sha'n't be more than a moment. I shall just change into the skirt of my habit." And she ran toward the château.

The next morning Beresford met her again, by chance, very early. He had finished his breakfast and gone out on the south terrace, when he saw her leaving the château. She wore the big white hat which had shaded her that other morning in the rose garden and she carried a small basket on one arm.

"*Bon jour*, monsieur," she said, cheerfully, when she saw Beresford. "You are up early—but so very early! I am going on an errand of mercy. Figure to yourself, an old *nou-nou* of mine who lives toward St. Cyr is ill, and I am carrying her certain things here in the basket. Do you not wish that you were a *nou-nou*, monsieur, and old and ill, and that you lived toward St. Cyr?"

"I do," said Beresford, fervently.

"I wish I were anything you like, if only you would carry me certain things in a basket and come to see me."

"Who knows?" said she. "When you are old—perhaps;" and she nodded her beautiful head very encouragingly.

"But is it far?" he asked.

"Oh, as for that," said she, "it is but a little way—hardly a mile, when one is outside the gate. I can go by the little gate to the north, beyond the gardens, because it is so near." She nodded her head to him, laughing, and moved toward the gardens around the west wing of the château.

Beresford strolled on to the stables and there found the earl arguing with a certain green hunter which he was attempting to put over a low bar at a leading rein.

The two amused themselves with the horse for a time and when they tired of that repaired to the dairy and lifted the long-suffering heifer. After about an hour they turned back toward the château.

"Where is Isabeau this morning?" inquired the earl.

"She has gone to visit an old nurse, toward St. Cyr," said Beresford. "She is taking her a small basket of things, I believe. I think that if you will direct me I shall go and meet mademoiselle."

"Ah, now, that is a good idea!" said the earl. You know the little gate, I think. Just turn to the right as you go out. The house is about a mile away, straight down the road."

Beresford went quickly across the gardens and out of the little gate in the high wall. The road was narrow and overgrown with grass, a mere country lane. He walked along it for half a mile, under the shade of overhanging trees and through lengths of open where the dust lay white like flour. The great walls of the Monsigny estate ran beside him for a space, but presently turned off at a sharp angle and there was open rolling country on either side, dotted with trees and with little white-plastered, red-roofed cottages.

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Far off to his left were huddled roofs and steeples, flanked by a great wood, and this, he thought, must be Versailles, though he could not see the palace. The road curved before him and trees stood close beside it, so that he could see only a little way; but he quickened his pace, knowing that Isabeau must be just around the bend.

It gave him a curious little throb of joy at the heart when, a moment later, he caught sight of her. The girl was walking slowly along the turf by the roadside. She had taken off the big white hat, for there was a long stretch of shade, and was swinging it at her side by its strings. She was singing to herself, in a little, high, sweet voice, some old song such as *nou-nous* sing to hush a child.

She saw him when he was still at some distance and halted, watching him with a smile as he approached. But Beresford went toward her quickly, and took her hands in his.

She looked up into his face, laughing softly, but the laugh died when she met his eyes and her head dropped again.

"It is nice that you came, very nice!" she said, softly. "Shall we walk back together to the château, monsieur? I have left the basket with the old *nou-nou*—*pauvre* Jeanne, she grows very feeble. She thought I was my mother, the other Isabeau. I cried—just the littlest bit. Shall we go back to the château?"

Beresford looked at a little soft green mound by the roadside. There was a great tree above, which threw over it the coolest and deepest of shades, and there were little white flowers for the pulling.

"The shade looks so very cool and sweet, mademoiselle," said he. The girl looked and sighed.

"So very cool and sweet," she agreed, and sighed again.

"Just a little Olympus waiting for its goddess," said he.

"Monsieur becomes poetical, no?" she murmured. "But me, I am very, very tired with so long a walk. The

sun was cruel." And she drooped most pitifully where she stood.

"Mademoiselle," said young Beresford, in a tone of great decision, "I cannot allow you to walk all the way home in this terrible sun without first resting." It seemed quite to have slipped his memory that the greater part of the way was in shade and that the sun was not yet high. "It would be dangerous," he concluded, firmly; "I should never forgive myself if you were made ill."

Isabeau looked again at the little grassy mound in the shade and back at young Beresford with a wistful smile.

"I suppose it is very improper," she ventured. "Madame de Brissal—ah, *pauvre* Madame de Brissal, she would faint away with horror!—but I am tired." And she moved doubtfully toward the little mound and sank down on it, in the midst of a billow of filmy skirts, laying her beautiful head against the tree's dark trunk.

Beresford sat at her feet. "Just a little Olympus waiting for its goddess," said he again.

The girl looked down at him under half-closed lids. "And its—god, monsieur?" she asked.

"Ah, no," he cried, "no, mademoiselle; just a humble, humble mortal, just a man who must sit at the mound's foot; just a man to worship the goddess, for where's the good of goddesses if they are not to be worshipped?"

She glanced down at him again, laughing softly, but the look that had been in his eyes when he came along the road to meet her was there still, and she turned away.

Beresford was looking up into her face with steady, widening eyes and his breath quickened as he looked. The wonderful young beauty of her, the pale gleam of her hair—the soul of gold—the flushed curve of her cheek and chin, the droop of her lips the lift of her breathing, the scent of her lacy gown that almost touched his shoulder, set his heart to racing,

made the veins throb at his temples. And, as it had been that other day in the chapel when he watched her kneeling by her mother's tomb, a great passion of tenderness and love took hold on him and thrilled him from head to foot.

She had been smiling out across the sunlit fields, but presently she turned her head and met his eyes. The smile died away and her eyes widened like his and, too, the fresh color in her cheeks died. She made a little involuntary forward movement where she sat and her hands trembled beside her. So they waited, silent and grave, a long time, for there is no mirth in a great love.

But presently the girl found her voice, a little broken whisper. "Monsieur," she said, in the broken whisper, "ah, monsieur, is—it true? is—it true?"

"Oh," cried the man; "I love you so that I cannot think or speak! I love you more than any one in all the world ever loved anything! If only I could tell you how I love you! You are the most beautiful thing that a man could dream! Ah, my heart, I cannot live without you." He bent over her, kneeling, and held her head between his two palms.

But the girl raised one slim hand and laid it on his cheek. Under it the cheek flamed suddenly crimson, then paled again. He caught the hand in both his own and held it against his lips. The girl's eyelids fluttered and closed. Then, after a time, she put up her other hand and with the two drew down his head, looking very steadily and gravely into his eyes, till his face was against her own, and he kissed her mouth.

"Oh, lord of my heart," said she, "there is no one in all my world but you! Didn't you know? ah, didn't you know?" Then, after a long while, "Dearest," she said, "was there a reason why you—why you avoided me for so long, why you would never be alone with me, but went about so soberly and *triste*? for I knew, long ago, that you—cared just a little. That first even-

ing by the lagoon I knew, and the morning in the rose garden I knew. I think I knew even last Winter in Mentone. Was there a reason, *mon cœur?*”

Beresford took her two hands, so slender and white and pink-tipped, into his and held them against his cheek. And he smiled at her with a certain resolute tightening of the lips, a certain squaring of the strong jaw.

“Yes,” said he, “there was a reason. I thought there was a reason. Do not ask me it. But I see now that there could be no reason strong enough to keep us apart. I see now that I was foolish, frightened by a phantom. There can be nothing cruel enough to part us. Loveliest, we can defy the world, now!”

He lifted her to her feet and they turned their faces toward Château Monsigny.

“Lord of my heart, we can defy the world, now!” said she.

VIII

LORD STRATTON was on the south terrace with a book when the two young people reached the château and his expression changed from placid good humor to a deep gravity, while young Beresford made an abrupt and very incoherent prayer for the hand of Isabeau de Monsigny. The viscount took his daughter in his arms, looking into her flushed face as if all at once he realized how very dear to him she was.

“He is better at other things than at making speeches, this young man,” said Lord Stratton. “But that is quite as well. I have been hoping for some time that you two would decide that you wished to marry.”

At the sound of a step on the flagstoned terrace he looked over Isabeau’s head, still holding her with one arm. Mrs. Marlowe was coming up from the avenue. He called to her and she moved a little way toward them.

“I wish you to be the first to hear some very good news,” said he. “My daughter Isabeau is to marry the Honorable Ashton Beresford. Won’t you

offer them your congratulations, and me as well? for I think I am as pleased about it as they are.”

But Mrs. Marlowe stood silent, looking from one to the other of the little group, wide-eyed and pale, and her fingers twisted and shook at her breast. Then, all at once, she turned, with a low cry, and ran in at the open door of the château.

Beresford looked after her, frowning and tight-lipped, but Isabeau and Lord Stratton gave voice to their amazement.

“What—what in the world is the matter?” cried the girl. “Why should she act so? Father, what is the matter with her?”

“God knows,” said the viscount, in a wondering tone. “She has acted very strangely several times of late. What can she—? Oh, she is very nervous and not at all well, and she has had an unhappy life. I suppose the sight of other people’s happiness is too much for her. We must make allowances. She will feel differently after a little. That was most curious; I do not understand.”

Mrs. Marlowe did not appear at luncheon, much to the relief of the others, save perhaps Lord Stratton, who was anxious about her; but they told the earl what had happened on the road to St. Cyr and that Isabeau was to be married to Ashton Beresford. The old gentleman was so delighted that he could hardly contain himself and became quite humorous in his elephantine fashion. He brought a flush to the unaccustomed cheek of Madame de Brissal by insisting on kissing her in honor of the occasion. And he drank to the health and happiness of the two young people till any other man but this iron veteran would have been under the table.

After luncheon Beresford went up to his rooms in search of a mislaid pipe. He came on Mrs. Marlowe in the upper corridor and would have turned into his room with only a nod, but she followed him and closed the door behind her.

"Is it true?" she demanded, quickly, with her back against the door. Her face was very white and her eyes burned. They seemed much larger than common.

"That I am to marry Mademoiselle de Monsigny?" he asked. "Oh, yes, that is true."

"After what I said to you last evening?" she persisted; "after my refusing to release you?"

Beresford turned on her impatiently. "I deny your right to hold me to anything," said he. "Must we go all over this argument again? I begin to tire of it. You are to marry another man. That fact in itself releases me." He felt a curious sense of impotence in speaking to her. It was as if he shouted to a deaf woman or argued with some one who did not understand his language. Men must arrive at conclusions or determine a course of conduct by reason and, being a man, he felt strangely helpless before this woman to whom, in her overwrought state, reason made no appeal whatever. He realized, as he had not realized before, her oddly dual nature, with its wholesome womanly side normal and tender, if weak, which could be so altered under the obsession of jealousy that she was left a demon, unreasoning and reckless.

His utter helplessness angered him. "Oh, this is perfect nonsense!" he cried, sharply. "You are trying to make us both play an absurd melodrama. I, for one, refuse the part. I have as good a right to marry as have you—or any one else."

But the woman came up closer to him, looking into his face with those burning, unnatural eyes.

"Oh, be careful, Tony!" she said, softly. "For heaven's sake, be careful! I—I warned you last night that I was not responsible for myself when that—thing was stabbing me through. I warned you not to try me too far; but you've done it, you've done it as quickly as ever you could. Now, have a care! I love you! Good God, how I love you, sometimes, and no other woman shall have you. If I

didn't know that you would drive me mad in a week with your coldness, if I thought there was any least spark of love for me left in you, I should throw over Lord Stratton and make you marry me. I shall never have you for my own, Tony, but neither shall that girl, for I'm going to stop it, here and now. I'm going to tell them about you and—and Mrs. Travers."

Beresford gave a short laugh of utter amazement. "You are going to give yourself away?" he demanded, still laughing. "Nonsense! Do you suppose for an instant that Lord Stratton would marry you if he knew you were Mrs. Travers? And, besides, you would not hurt me at all. They know that I figured in that affair; both Lord Stratton and the earl know it. You're mad, Margaret!"

"I am not Mrs. Travers!" she cried, in a fierce tone; "I am Mrs. Marlowe and they shall never know that I was divorced, for you have promised that you would not tell. You'll not break your promise, Tony; you'll not betray me, whatever I may say. You never broke a promise in your life and you'd no more think of betraying a woman than you would think of murdering her. Oh, I have you, Tony! I have you fast and strong! I shall tell them that you are not a fit man to marry Isabeau de Monsigny. I shall tell them that you are bound to a divorced woman and not free to marry—and you dare not deny it, for you can't betray me. Oh, I have you, my friend! I can never marry you, but I can wreck you. Tony, Tony, Tony! could you not love me a little? Have you no little bit of tenderness left for me? See! I'll throw over this match with Lord Stratton. We can go away together and be married. Tony, couldn't you learn to love me again—just a little, just a little, boy?"

She had fallen over forward against him, catching him with her hands about the shoulders, and her face was hidden on his breast. Her voice

broke into racking, painful sobs and he felt all her frail body shake with them.

He put her from him almost roughly, staring into her eyes, and his own were wide with amazement and horror and unbelief.

"You'll not do such a thing, Margaret!" he cried; "you'll not dare do such a thing! Great God, it's unbelievable, it's monstrous! No! no! no sane woman could grovel so low! I'll not believe it."

"I am not sane, Tony," she said, dully, and her eyes fronted him, unafraid. "I am quite mad sometimes, when—when I think of certain things. Yes, I shall do it and I am going to do it now—I am quite desperate, nothing you could say would stop me. I know just how shameful and low and contemptible I am, but I could no more stop than any cornered animal could lie still to be done to death without fighting."

Beresford sprang forward, catching her by the arm. "Stop!" he cried, hoarsely; "stop! You must not go, you must not be so mad. I tell you, you would die of the shame afterward. You must not do it. By heaven, if you do——"

"What, Tony?" she asked, facing him again.

"I shall tell them, on my part," he said, slowly, "just who and what you are and why you are masquerading here under a stolen name. Two can play at your game, my lady. If you've a mind to crawl so low, I, too, shall do a bit of crawling. Tell a word of what you have been threatening, and I will expose you."

"No, you won't!" she cried, swiftly, and she came up to him once more, till her face was close to his and her eyes burned into his eyes. "No, you won't, Tony! Ruin a woman? No, not you! Some men might, but you won't. Try it, my friend. Try to say the words and your tongue won't move. Ah, I know you, Tony, better than you know yourself. You'd let fifty women wreck your life, vilify you, lie about you, ruin you, but you'd

never turn on one of them! Try it, Tony, try it!"

Then, in a moment and before he could stop her, she had slipped out of the room, closing the door after her. Beresford dropped back into a chair, covering his face with shaking hands.

IX

How long he sat there he did not know, but it was probably not more than a few minutes, which might have been hours. He was aroused by a knocking at the door. A lackey entered at his word and said that Lord Stratton wished to see him on the south terrace.

"She'll not do it," cried Beresford; "she'll not dare. It was a wretched trick, to get a promise out of me. Nonsense! Of course she won't do it."

He ran down the stairs, laughing at himself for having given the thing a moment's credence, but his heart beat fast for all that.

On the south terrace he found Mrs. Marlowe and Isabeau de Monsigny and Lord Stratton. The viscount was walking nervously back and forth, smiting his hands together. He frowned and his eyes were anxious and appealing as he turned to meet young Beresford.

"Ashton," said he, "I sent for you because Mrs. Marlowe has said that she knows something very—serious about you, something that must prevent your marriage with Isabeau." He paused a moment, looking toward the woman, and his eyes seemed to grow more anxious, more pained and appealing. "I wished you to be present when she tells this, because I am certain that you can explain. I wish to say that I have perfect confidence in you, perfect. It may be—it may be that Mrs. Marlowe has been misinformed. I am certain that you can explain."

Beresford looked once at Margaret Marlowe and from her to Isabeau. The girl's face was very pale, but she

smiled a little, scornfully, and her purple eyes were tender and full of trust. There was no doubt or fear in them. Then he drew a quick breath.

"I am ready to hear what Mrs. Marlowe has to tell," said he.

The woman turned toward Lord Stratton and began speaking at once. Beresford noted that her face was cold and still; she was holding herself well in control, but the hands hanging at her sides shook violently and her chin trembled sometimes so that she had to pause between words to steady it.

"I think you know, Lord Stratton," she said, in a low voice, "that no one could regret more than I this being forced to—to make a scene at your house, to denounce one of your guests; but I have no choice. It is precisely because I am one of your guests, because I owe you a debt of hospitality, that I must not stand idly by while a great wrong is being done you. If I should see a burglar attempting to steal the Monsigny plate it would be my duty immediately to tell you; it is still more my duty to tell you when I see any one attempting to steal what is far more dear to you. This man is here on false pretenses. He has no right to marry your daughter or any other woman—save one. He is not free!"

Lord Stratton would have interrupted her, but she raised her hand and went on, speaking rapidly, with her eyes, wide and dark and defiant, fixed on young Beresford's face.

"He is bound to another woman," she said, "a woman who was divorced by her husband on this man's account. Yes, you know of the affair, you spoke of it once. The woman is a Mrs. Travers. You thought, and other people thought, that this man was innocent, that he was wrongfully dragged into the case; but that is not so. He was not innocent. When the affair was over he promised to marry the woman, Mrs. Travers; he told her that the rest of his life was hers, that he would never marry any one else. Then he went away. That

is the sort of man you were giving your daughter to, Lord Stratton; that is the sort of man you were welcoming in your house—a man who compromised another man's wife and then, when the woman was cast adrift, ran away lest he should have to marry her!"

"How do you know all this?" demanded a harsh voice behind her. "How do you happen to have such a quantity of special knowledge about the Travers divorce affair?"

The woman swung about, white and gasping. It was the old Earl of Strobe who spoke. His bushy white eyebrows were drawn down and together and the keen old eyes flashed at her. For a moment she was off her guard, shaking in a panic, for she feared the old earl more than any man living; but she was herself again directly.

"I know poor Mrs. Travers—since you ask, sir," said Mrs. Marlowe, with a certain cold dignity. "She has a little villa near Tours where she has hidden a broken heart and a broken life from the world. I visit her there sometimes, for we were friends many years ago, dear friends. She has been a sinful woman, if you like, but she has been well punished for it and I, for one, will not turn from her." She looked again toward young Beresford and her voice rose a little. It was wonderful acting.

"But," she cried, "if that poor woman was sinful, what of this man? betrayer and coward! Oh, it is quite time that some one showed him for what he is!" She turned to Lord Stratton, lowering her voice.

"When I came here," she went on, "I did not know that this person was to be your guest. You told me of it soon after my arrival and, if you chance to remember, I had some difficulty in hiding my feelings. I made an excuse for losing countenance. Afterward I did not wish to make a scene; I thought it better not to do so, for it would have been very unpleasant to all of you. I did not know his object in coming here. To-day, when

you told me that he was to marry Isabeau, I could remain silent no longer. I owed it to you to tell what I knew. That is all, I think, Lord Stratton. This man is not fit or free to marry your daughter!"

Lord Stratton drew his hand across his brow and his usually strong and iron face was a mask of amazed, incredulous horror.

"Ashton, Ashton," he said, appealingly, and his voice shook; "this cannot be true; it cannot! I will not believe it! She must be wrong. Tell us that it is not true. Explain it, Ashton! Tell us that it is not true!" His hand upon young Beresford's arm shook like the voice.

"I tell you," cried Beresford, fiercely, "it is—is all—all—" His eyes met the woman's eyes and she moved closer to him, white-faced and somber.

"Can you deny it, Mr. Beresford?" she said, very low; "can you deny it? Think a moment. Either it is true or I am the most contemptible thing in all the world. Either I have been speaking the truth or I am what you would call, if I were a man, a blackguard, and worse. Are you not bound to that woman? Did you not promise to marry her and has she not refused to release you from your promise? Are you free, Mr. Beresford?"

A great wave of crimson spread up over Beresford's face and ebbed again, leaving him very pale. His mind moved with a certain unnatural swiftness and he saw clearly what was facing him, the utter and lasting ruin of all that made his life dear. Everything in him ached and struggled to burst out in denunciation of the monstrous charges the woman made, but he was curiously helpless. His tongue stammered and would not form the words. He remembered dully what the woman had said to him up in his room. "Try it, my friend. Try to say the words and your tongue won't move. Ah, I know you, Tony, better than you know yourself. You'd let fifty women wreck your life, vilify

you, lie about you, ruin you, but you'd never turn on one of them! Try it, Tony, try it!"

Yes, she had known him better than he knew himself. He could not turn on her. He was, in some strange way, physically incapable of it.

"Can you deny it, Mr. Beresford?" she asked again, her eyes on his face.

Beresford bowed his head and made a queer little helpless gesture with both hands.

"I cannot deny it," said he.

But Isabeau de Monsigny ran forward, brushing past the other woman, and caught him by the shoulders, looking into his eyes.

"It is not true!" she cried, wildly. "It is a frightful, horrible lie! I won't believe it. No one can make me believe it. Oh, say it is a lie! Why do you stand there silent? Do you wish to break my heart? Tell them it isn't true!"

"I cannot deny it," said Beresford again.

Lord Stratton raised a haggard, sad face to him. "You cannot deny this?" he asked, wistfully.

"No," said young Beresford; "no, I cannot deny it."

"Then," said Lord Stratton, "then——"

"I know what you would say," broke in the younger man, "I—shall be leaving within the hour for Paris." He took the girl's hands from his shoulders, not looking at her, and put her very gently away from him and then he bowed and went quickly indoors.

He packed the two large Gladstone bags he had brought with him to Monsigny and rang for a servant to take them down, and he asked the servant to have a trap of some sort sent around from the stables to drive him to Versailles. Then he sat down in a chair by an open window with his head in his hands, silent and still, for a very long time.

The rolling of wheels on the gravel drive beneath his window aroused him. He looked out and saw that it was the trap come to take him to the

station and he gathered up his hat and gloves and went down.

At the head of the stairs he had to step aside to allow some one to come up the last of the winding turns. In an instant he saw that it was Mrs. Marlowe and he drew further back into the shadows, hoping that she would not see him. She was sobbing as she came, with her head bent low. A violent trembling that shook her from head to foot—the reaction from the long nervous strain in which she had held herself so calmly—made her approach slow and difficult, so that she held to the wall with one hand and paused a little after each uncertain step. Nevertheless, she saw him waiting there in the shadows and halted at the top of the stairs, leaning against the wall.

"Oh, Tony, Tony!" she moaned, stretching out an arm to him as she clung to the wall. "Oh, Tony, I have ruined the one thing in all the world that I loved. God help me! I wonder if you will ever understand, Tony! I wonder if you will ever understand!"

But Beresford passed by her quickly and on down the stairs, not looking into her face again, and as he rounded the next turn he heard her sobbing break out afresh.

Down by the steps of the terrace, where the trap was waiting, he found the earl and Isabeau. Lord Stratton had disappeared. The old gentleman seized the hand Beresford would have withheld and pumped at it vigorously.

"I want you to understand," he growled, "that I don't believe a word of all that damned nonsense—not a word. I don't understand what is going on and maybe I never shall, though it won't be for want of trying; but I know that woman is playing you a nasty trick, somehow, and you're such a cursedly quixotic beggar that you won't clear the matter up. Just you mind my words! We'll have this thing explained, or break our necks trying. I know she's playing some sort of game."

Beresford shook his head and tried to smile. "I'm afraid it can't be ex-

plained," said he, "though God knows I'm grateful to you for feeling like this about it. No, it won't be cleared up. I'm—I'm done for, sir."

But the girl came close to him, looking into his face, and her eyes were very troubled and shadowy and full of distress, and her lips quivered.

"Oh, dearest!" said she, "for the last time, will you not answer me? You have not said that those things the—the woman told were true. Were they true, my heart? were they true?"

"I cannot deny them," he said again.

"They were not true!" she cried. "Don't you suppose I would know if they were true? Don't you suppose I could tell? Ah, if you would only speak!" Her voice broke a little and the beautiful head drooped, but she reared it again proudly.

"You are shielding some one," she continued, in a tone of certainty; "I know that you are shielding somebody and taking on yourself blame that you do not deserve. If we could only clear this dreadful thing up! if we could only clear it up! But, dearest, though you are going away and though I may not see you for a long time, never forget, oh, never forget that I believe in you, trust you always and—and love you, *mon cœur*, love you! I think we shall know the truth some time—I feel it. But if not—why, if not, still I shall trust you. Good-bye! Ah, no; *au revoir*, that is better. Listen! If these clouds do not go, if you cannot come back to Monsigny, if we cannot find out the truth and lay it before my father, send for me, *mon cœur*, and I will come to you. I will not lose you so easily! I will come to you anywhere. *Au revoir, mon roi!*"

She put out her two hands to him, but young Beresford drew back, holding himself closely in check.

"No," said he, "I will not touch you now, not while I am under this—this shadow. If ever it is cleared away I shall come back. Oh, God keep you, my queen!" He climbed into the trap

beside the groom who was to drive him and they rolled swiftly away down the avenue.

But up at a window of the château, behind filmy white curtains that hid her from sight, a woman stood watching for the last glimpse of him before the trap was hidden among the gloomy firs. And when he was quite gone she dropped her face on her hands, sobbing still from sheer exhaustion, but dry-eyed, for she was past tears.

"If I could unsay it, Tony!" she cried, voicelessly; "if only I could unsay it! Oh, how can a woman so hurt the man she loves?" Then, after a time, she raised her head again, looking idly out of the window, and as she did so she gave a sudden violent shiver, for her eyes had fallen on the old Earl of Strobe who stood just below, at the edge of the terrace, with his granddaughter. His grim face and his leonine strength had never seemed to her so terrible, so sinister. She was beginning to have an almost superstitious fear of the man.

The earl, meanwhile, was gazing after the vanished trap and bending his white brows in puzzled thought. "If one only knew where to begin in unraveling the thing!" he growled. "If one only had something upon which to start! Beresford won't say a word, that is certain, and the woman—I suppose nothing could be frightened out of her. Ah, the other woman, the Mrs. Travers! If one could find her, now!" But the girl looked up suddenly, with so strange a change in her expression, so swift a movement, that he broke off in the middle of the word.

"I don't believe there is any other woman," said the girl, in a quick, trembling voice. "I believe she is Mrs. Travers herself. No other woman would have told her such things. She is Mrs. Travers, I tell you! Who knows anything about her past life? Where does she come from? Who was her husband? No one can tell you. Oh, I'm sure she is Mrs. Travers, *grandpère!*"

"By heaven," cried the old earl, and

his own voice trembled with excitement, "by heaven, I believe you are right! Why did none of us think of that before? I have a notion that I was near the idea myself when I asked her how she knew all this stuff, but her confoundedly glib answer about Mrs. Travers and her villa near Tours quite upset my mind. By Jove, if you should be right!" He paced up and down the terrace, jerking his white head and working his bushy eyebrows excitedly.

"But how to find out?" he said; "how to prove that it is so? The divorce was granted five years ago. Wait, wait!" He stopped dead in his walk and held up one hand.

"Those London weeklies!" he cried; "the file of them in the library! They run back over ten years! The affair was much talked of at the time, I remember. Travers was well known. They'll have it—the papers! Oh, why did not I think of it before? I must be growing old."

He was making hurriedly for the door, when he almost ran into Lord Stratton coming out.

"Ah," said the old gentleman, "I was wishing to see you. Do you remember the month in which that Travers divorce affair took place? I have reason for asking. Also, do you remember anything peculiar about the case? In particular, was there any other man concerned beside Ashton Beresford?"

"I am not certain," said the viscount, "but I believe the thing occurred during the early Winter—December or January, I should say; possibly November. I have no especial reason for remembering, save that I knew Colonel Travers. You did also, I think. I do not recollect that any other man was concerned in the thing, except that painter chap—what is his name—Dimmesdale? He was, and I believe is, a great friend of Beresford's and was to have given certain evidence in Beresford's favor, but didn't turn up. He was ill somewhere on the Continent. He has a studio in Paris now, I believe. I have

meant once or twice to ask him out here. That is all I remember of the case. As I said before, it made no particularly strong impression on me."

He turned away and stared gloomily out over the tree-tops. "I am not given to emotion," he continued, "as you very well know, but this thing has cut me up badly. I would have sworn by young Beresford. Indeed, I can't help feeling that there is a mistake somewhere. If only the lad would deny it! if only he would deny it!"

The old earl passed on into the château, nodding his white head. "There is a bigger mistake somewhere than you're reckoning for," said he, grimly.

A half-hour later the earl came hurriedly out of the house and found his granddaughter sitting forlornly alone in a corner of the terrace. There were certain evidences that she had been indulging in tears. The old gentleman's hands shook with excitement as he held out to her a long narrow strip cut from an illustrated paper. The strip was a single column of print with two portraits at its head, reproductions from photographs. One of the portraits represented a man in uniform, the other was of a woman.

The girl gave a smothered cry. "It's she! oh, it's she! it's Mrs. Marlowe!"

"It is," said the earl; "it is Mrs. Marlowe, if we are to be civil and call her by her present *nom de guerre*. Read the notice there. It is not exactly *jeune-fille* literature, but the case is rather pressing. Read particularly the last paragraph, about the other man. That is the interesting part—the other man. His name is Dimmesdale and he is a very well-known painter. I am going to Paris this evening to make a call on Mr. Dimmesdale."

X

YOUNG Beresford, when he had reached Paris, put his luggage into a *fiacre* and drove at once from the Gare St. Lazare to his chambers in the rue

du Faubourg St. Honoré. Then, as it was nearly seven o'clock, he proceeded to dress for dinner. Since leaving Château Monsigny he had steadfastly refused to allow his mind to dwell on what had happened. He had driven his thoughts, by sheer force of will, into trivial channels, into making plans for amusing himself during the next few days, even contemplating a fortnight's trip to Switzerland and some climbing in the Oberland. Of course, he knew that this was no more than a postponement of something that must be gone through with, that there was a very black time ahead of him somewhere, which no temporary distraction could hope to lighten; but he shrank from the full realization of what had come on him, as a man shrinks from the operating-table and the surgeon's knife.

He had no intention whatever of weakly submitting to the absolute defeat of his hopes, to the absolute ruin of his character with the persons whose good will he most cared for. He was a man strong and determined, and he loved Isabeau de Monsigny more than most men ever love anything in all their lives; but the woman had been very clever in dealing her blow. She had known him so well that she had felt perfectly secure in trusting to an almost quixotic and extraordinarily rare sense of chivalry that existed in the man, which five years before had led him to take a stand and to make promises as few other men would have done. She had so phrased her denunciation of him that to deny it, to clear himself, meant that he must expose her; and this, she knew, he was entirely incapable of doing. Her only mistake was in failing to realize that danger might come from other quarters.

He had no intention, it has been said, of submitting to this condition and he fully intended somehow to clear himself of the stigma that had been put upon him; but he needed time to consider and for the immediate present he wished not to consider at all. The blow had been a very heavy one. It would have been interesting to see, if

subsequent events had not, as they did, hurried the affair to a conclusion without his interference, to what extremes a man having this temperament, strong and passionate and determined, but handicapped always by a sense of honor almost fantastic, would have gone to clear his name and to gain the woman he loved; for, in the end, he would surely have gained her at any cost.

He stood a moment, when he had dressed, looking down into the busy rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, where cabs passed in an endless double chain and the sidewalks were crowded by homeward-bound shoppers and working-people.

"I think I shall look up Dimmesdale," Beresford said to himself at last. "He probably will not yet have left the studio and I mustn't be alone for the evening. Good God, not that!"

He took a *fiacre* and drove across the river and along the broad Boulevard St. Germain and up the rue de Rennes, and turned into the quiet little rue Notre Dame des Champs, where Dimmesdale's studio sat in the midst of a garden, behind a great wall with "*Défense d'Afficher*" painted large across the stucco. Dimmesdale himself came to the door in answer to the ring and greeted Beresford with the quiet heartiness of long friendship.

Dimmesdale was a rather tall man, but very slightly made, and he had the pallor of one little given to sports or to an outdoor life. His lack of muscular development showed at the neck and in the wrists and in the legs when the cloth of the trousers was drawn tightly over them. He had a handsome face, but it was heavily lined and haggard. He could not have been over forty or thereabouts, but he had the look of a man ten years older, and his eyes were very weary.

"I am glad you chanced to turn up," said he, "for I have been feeling just a bit seedy and at odds with the world all day long. I was debating, a few minutes ago as to whether I should dress and go out somewhere for dinner or dine comfortably here—out in the garden, perhaps. I sometimes have

Jean bring me in a sort of dinner from one of the restaurants near. What have you been doing of late? Where are you from?"

"I have been stopping out in the country for a few days," said Beresford, "at Château Monsigny, near Versailles. Lord Stratton, the son of the old Earl of Strobe, married the daughter and heiress of the last marquis a long time ago, you know. He lives there now with his daughter, who is the present heiress, and with the old earl. It is a beautiful place."

"Ah, yes," said Dimmesdale, "I have met the earl. Heavens, what a splendid old type! And I think I have met Lord Stratton. I saw the girl once here at the Opéra. I rather think she is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. I should like to paint her. Was there a party?"

"No," said young Beresford, "only one other guest—I think I shall be wanting to tell you something a bit later, something very important, an important difficulty. I could tell no one else but you, for you already know many of the circumstances connected with the case. You know, or knew, this other guest at Monsigny. However, that will wait till after dinner. By all means, let us have dinner here in the garden. Afterward, I think—I am not sure, but I think—I should like to get very drunk or do something else equally distracting. I need distraction very badly, Dimmesdale; I'm in a devil of a way!"

They dined under the trees of the garden with no other light than the candles on the little table and a half-dozen orange-colored paper lanterns strung over their heads. But, as the evening advanced, it became cloudy and a warning drop or two of rain splashed through the leaves, so that the two men were driven back into the great studio for their coffee and tobacco.

"It might be a good time," said the painter, after lamps were lighted and the coffee set ready to hand, with decanters of cognac and of colored liqueurs, "it might be a good time,

now, to tell me about this other guest at Château Monsigny and about the difficulty you are in. I take it for granted that the other guest was a woman." He laughed and struck a match to light his cigarette.

But, before young Beresford could answer, there came a knock at the studio door and Dimmesdale went to open it. At the sound of the voice from without young Beresford sprang up with a smothered cry.

"Come in, sir," said the painter. "It is very wet. You are Lord Strope, I think?"

The old earl came into the room, setting his wet umbrella near the door.

"Ah," he said, as he caught sight of Beresford beyond, "I am glad you are here. I thought it quite probable that you might be. It is a very wet night, very wet. These *fiacres* are poor things to be about in when it is stormy, even with the top and boot up." He seated himself on a broad divan, chafing his strong hands together and working his eyebrows up and down in his curious gorilla fashion.

"Will you have some coffee, sir," asked Dimmesdale, "and a cigarette or a cigar? We had just finished dining and were starting on the coffee."

"No coffee, thank you," said the old gentleman, "but a little glass of that brandy, if you will be so good. No, I won't smoke."

He drank the brandy slowly and in silence, and set down the little glass, frowning as if he were at a loss as to how he should commence what he wished to say.

"Mr. Dimmesdale," he began, finally, "we are involved, out at Monsigny, in a very strange and very serious tangle of misfortune, which threatens great danger to two ancient houses and great unhappiness to several people. I think that you are the only man who can extricate us and I have come here to ask you to do it. It may be I am mistaken as to certain facts and you have not the power to help us, or it may be that you will not be willing; but, as I have said, the happi-

ness of a number of people depends, I believe, on you, and the honor of two houses." He paused a moment, watching the painter's face, and Dimmesdale frowned across the table at him with puzzled, uncomprehending eyes.

"My son, Viscount Stratton," continued the old earl, slowly, "wishes to marry a certain woman who calls herself Mrs. Marlowe, but whose real name is Mrs. Travers, the divorced wife of Colonel Travers, formerly of the African service."

Dimmesdale sat down quietly in a chair that stood near and leaned his head on his hand. Young Beresford would have spoken, but the earl held up a silencing hand.

"This marriage, as you will readily see," he went on, "would be most unfortunate—for obvious reasons. I may explain that my son is not aware of the woman's real identity. He believes her to be the widow she claims to be. Further, this woman, Mrs. Travers, has, actuated, I believe, by jealousy, broken off an engagement between my granddaughter, Isabeau de Monsigny, and Ashton Beresford, by accusing Mr. Beresford to Isabeau's father and myself of an outrageous course of conduct which I think altogether untrue. She accuses him of having betrayed this Mrs. Travers, whom she claims as a friend of hers, of having been responsible for her divorce and, finally, of having evaded a promise to marry her. These preposterous accusations Mr. Beresford, through some fantastic sense of honor, I take it, refuses to deny. How I have discovered the identity of the woman I need not tell you. I shall say only this, that in discovering it I came on certain facts which led me to think that you, and you alone, could, if you so desired, clear away all these difficulties, free Ashton Beresford's name from stain and prevent a most unfortunate marriage."

Dimmesdale sat for a long time silent after the earl had finished. His face was hidden from the light by the hand that supported his head. Then, pres-

ently, he rose to his feet and took a turn up and down the long room, and the two men who sat watching him were amazed to see, now that his face was in the light, how white it had grown. He halted at last before the old earl and threw out his hands with a slow gesture, as if he were very tired.

"I will do anything you wish, sir," he said, simply.

XI

LORD STRATTON was pacing up and down the long flagstoned stretch of the south terrace. There was a briar pipe between his teeth which he believed himself to be smoking, but he forgot it every few minutes, so that it went out and had to be relighted, and after a while he neglected it altogether, biting at the stem and shifting it between his teeth from comfortable habit.

Earlier in the evening it had been raining, but the sky was, at this time, nearly clear again, save for ragged masses of driven cloud to the southward, and the moon shone like a wash of silver on the wet leaves of the trees and on the wet turf and the shining little pools of water at the margin of the avenue.

It had been a most trying day and, though the viscount was not an emotional man, the events that had taken place had moved him strongly, more strongly than he would have believed possible. After the matter of Isabeau's engagement to Ashton Beresford had been so satisfactorily arranged had come Mrs. Marlowe's denunciation of Beresford and his inability to deny the charge. Beresford had acted curiously, the viscount thought. He had not borne the air of guilt. Indeed, it seemed impossible that the man could have been such a blackguard. He would have shown it in other ways. Still, he had not denied the charges. He had admitted their truth—no, he had not done that! He had been careful not

to do that. He had said that he could not deny what was said. There might be something in that.

The viscount took the pipe from his teeth and paused a moment in his walk to consider. Yes, there might be something in that. It was all very strange. He wished that he could see Mrs. Marlowe again, to ask for more details. There were certain discrepancies, certain unexplained points in what she had said that he would like to probe, for he was a careful man.

Mrs. Marlowe had not been down to dinner, nor later in the evening. She had sent word that a headache was confining her to her room. The old earl had eaten a hasty meal alone and very early, after which he had dashed off to Paris, on business of importance, so he said. He had looked unusually alert and eager. So the other three, Isabeau, Madame de Brissal and himself, had sat down to a very silent and very miserable dinner. They had not lingered at the table.

Lord Stratton pulled out his watch as he reached the little patch of moonlight at one end of the terrace. He thought it must be growing late, but was surprised to find that it was only a little after ten. Just at that moment the bugle blew faint and clear from the lodge.

"That must be my father back from Paris," said the viscount to himself. "He must have driven across from Versailles in a hired cab. I think no trap is out of the stables." He waited at the steps of the terrace for the vehicle to come up the long, winding avenue, but when it did at last appear from the gloom of the firs, a hired *fiacre*, as he had surmised, there were three men in it instead of one.

The old earl descended first and Lord Stratton lifted his eyebrows slightly as Ashton Beresford followed him. The third man he recognized as the painter Dimmesdale, whom he had once or twice met and rather liked.

The earl paid the *cocher* and turned to his son.

"There are certain very important matters affecting us all," said he, "that must be settled to-night, and certain dangers to be cleared away. I have asked these two gentlemen out here to help us in the affair. Will you come inside?"

Lord Stratton led the way into the book-lined library without a word. He felt that something momentous was about to happen, something quite beyond his knowledge or expectation, for his father had spoken with more than his usual earnestness and he knew, moreover, that the earl would not have brought Ashton Beresford and Dimmesdale out to Monsigny except for an excellent reason.

The viscount sat down beside the large square writing-table that stood in the middle of the room, but his father remained standing.

"You have been—we have been," said the old earl, "very greatly deceived in a guest who is now under this roof. She is not who or what she claims to be and the marriage arrangement between her and yourself must be broken off."

Lord Stratton laughed, sharply. "If that is the result of all your mystery and activity," said he, "you might better have stopped at home. The marriage will not be broken off."

"If you will touch that bell near your hand," said the earl, with no show of temper, and from that alone his son might have seen how much in earnest he was, "we will send a servant to call the woman here. I am not speaking idly. I can prove all I say."

"Nonsense!" cried the viscount. "I shall do nothing of the sort. I will not have my own guest cross-questioned and browbeaten."

But the earl took a folded slip of paper, the slip cut that afternoon from a London weekly, out of his pocket and gave it to his son.

"Read that," said he, "and look at the two portraits at the top of the column."

Lord Stratton glanced at the head-

ing and at the two little portraits. Then he drew a quick, shivering breath and closed his eyes for an instant. He read the print through, twice. Afterward, he sat for a little time silent, with bent head. At last he touched the bell at his side.

"Take my compliments to Mrs. Marlowe and ask her to be so good as to come down-stairs to the library on a matter of importance," he said to the servant. "And ask Madame de Brissal also to come. I will not have Mrs. Marlowe here without another woman in the room to lend her countenance," he added, turning toward his father.

The servant was absent for several minutes and then returned to say that Madame de Brissal would be down at once, but that Mrs. Marlowe begged to be excused for this evening, since she was suffering greatly and was on the point of retiring.

"Take my compliments to Mrs. Marlowe," said Lord Stratton, "and tell her that the matter will not admit of delay. Tell her that I am waiting in the library."

But when the man had again left the room, he rose and paced to and fro, restlessly. He met the old earl's somber eyes and halted impatiently.

"What if this is true?" he cried, raising the crumpled slip of paper. "What if she was Mrs. Travers? It does not necessarily mean that she was a guilty woman, nor does it clear his name!" And he turned for a moment, frowning, toward young Beresford.

But the earl put a hand on his son's shoulder and looked into his eyes, shaking his white head.

"She lied, Richard," said he, very gently. "She lied about others as well as about herself and for a reason that will be made plain later. She was a guilty woman and she has lied throughout. You must let me ask her the questions, for I know many facts that you do not. I shall not browbeat or abuse her, but I must make her tell us the truth; then you will be convinced." He turned to

where Dimmesdale sat in the shadow. "Will you step into the further room beyond those portières?" he said. "It might be better for you not to be seen till the proper time comes. I shall call you."

Then, when the painter had retired through the hangings, they sat down once more, not speaking again, and waited through what seemed a very long time, till there came a slow step outside the door and Mrs. Marlowe's voice.

"Are you in here, Lord Stratton? Dear me, your message was alarmingly imperative! I was quite terrified, you may be sure! Have I not been quick?" She stood in the doorway, laughing gently and peering forward into the dimly lighted room. She was dressed in a loose trailing house-gown of black, open a little at the neck and with sleeves of lace that came only to the elbows. She was, as always of late, very pale and the circles under her eyes seemed darker than their wont. Old Madame de Brissal, greatly wondering and half frightened, hovered behind her. All at once Mrs. Marlowe saw the old earl and Ashton Beresford, and one of her hands went suddenly to her breast.

"Oh," she cried, "I—I thought—I did not know—I thought Lord Stratton was alone."

The earl came forward at once and pushed out a chair for her. Madame de Brissal had already slipped into a chair by the door.

"Will you not sit down?" he said, and there was in his tone an absence of its habitual gruffness, a curious change almost to kindness that sent a sudden chill through her. Mrs. Marlowe had always been afraid of the old man, terribly afraid, but this new side of him terrified her afresh.

The earl sat down opposite her at the big table, folding his arms on its edge.

"We asked you to come down," he began, "because it is necessary that we should know a little more about certain matters relative to what occurred this afternoon and to—other

things. Now, in the first place—" he paused a moment, looking reflectively toward Lord Stratton—"my son has told me that he wishes to marry you, that he has asked for your hand and that you have accepted him. But a man in high position, Mrs. Marlowe, a man who is of an ancient house and who will, one day, be the head of that house and Earl of Strope, must think of many things in marrying, many things beyond his inclinations. He must, for one thing, know all about the woman who is to be his wife and possibly the mother of his children. Does it not occur to you that we know very little about you? Will you not tell us more about yourself? You must see that it is necessary. Tell us about your earlier life and your husband and your people and where in England you lived before your husband's death. Let me see—your husband died four years ago, I think you said. In America, was it not?"

"Yes," said the woman, in a low voice; "yes, in America, in Chicago. No, no, no, I say! No, not in America! What am I saying? It was in India! Surely, I told you India, Lord Strope! Why did you say America?"

"That," said the old gentleman, "was a slip; I meant India, of course. And his name? Ah, I remember! John—John Marlowe."

"Yes," she said again, not raising her eyes, "John Marlowe."

"No, wait!" said the earl; "wait a moment. Am I not wrong again? Surely, it was Charles—you told my son the other day. Why, yes, of course, it was Charles."

But the woman looked up swiftly, with quivering lips and a white, hunted face.

"Oh, why—why quibble about these little things, Lord Strope?" she cried, in a shaking voice that seemed on the edge of sobs. "Why harry me with—with going over and over them? I—I suppose I am a very—foolish—nervous woman, but I—I cannot bear to talk about—all that. It is too—too sad. Let me—go to my room. I

will not be questioned so. My husband was John Marlowe—John—John. And he died four years ago in India. Now you have it all! Let me go! John Marlowe, sir, John Marlowe!"

"Monseigneur, oh, monseigneur," begged old Madame de Brissal, "be gentle, monseigneur! Remember that madame is a woman, and not well. Be gentle, monseigneur!"

"Not John *Travers*, madame, not John *Travers*?" cried the earl, in a stern voice, raising himself half out of his chair and leaning across the table toward Mrs. Marlowe, his fierce eyes glittering.

The woman gave a sudden, gasping cry and fell forward against the edge of the table, with her hands under her. Then, in an instant, she had whirled on Ashton Beresford like a cornered animal.

"You told!" she cried, in a shaking whisper; "you told, you coward! Ah, you contemptible coward! You broke your word and told them—to save yourself!"

"No," said young Beresford, quietly, "I have told nothing. You know I would not tell to save myself."

"This told," said the old earl; "this betrayed you, Mrs. Travers. I cut it out of a weekly paper." And he passed her the slip that Lord Stratton had read a few moments before.

She looked at the two portraits and she read the notice through slowly to the end. Then, as Lord Stratton had done, she sat a long time silent, with bowed head and drooping shoulders.

"Yes," she said at last, in a tired voice, "yes, I am Mrs. Travers. I will pretend no longer. You have trapped me at last, run me to earth. Aren't you proud of it? Isn't it something to gloat over?" She looked up with a sort of pitiful bitterness. "Aren't you proud of it?" she said again, "three great men who've harried and hunted and driven from pillar to post a poor woman whom another man had cast out from his home! Oh, it's a triumph, isn't it? It's a capital game, isn't it? Why had I not a right to my life?" she cried, in a mounting voice. "Why

had I not a right to change my name and to live among my own class, who would have turned me out of their doors if they had known who I was? Was I not as good as they, the people I went among? Aye, better, better! oh, infinitely better! for you know the lives that some of them lead—but no lying divorce bill has robbed them of all that makes a woman's life sweet." She turned desperately to Lord Stratton, where he sat in a great chair, his elbows on its arms and his hands supporting his head; and she slipped down on the floor, so that she was kneeling before him, and her hands clung to an arm of the chair.

"Oh, are you like the rest of them?" she cried, sobbing a little. "Are you going to cast me out to—to God knows what, this time? Are you going to cry shame after me and point your finger at me because I was another man's wife and people lied to him? What does it matter who I was? You have wished to marry me. You have asked me to marry you and I am no different than I was then. Oh, I would make you a good wife. I swear I would, I swear it! I've so wanted to marry you! It would be such a new life to me, such peace and comfort and content! You don't know the hell I've been through for five years, the fear, the dread, the lying! Ah, how I hated it all! Don't cast me off, Lord Stratton! You said I was the only woman you would think of marrying and I'm the same woman now. Am I not? am I not? I could make you happy, you know I could. Don't turn me away for a lying divorce bill!"

"Was it a lying divorce bill, Mrs. Travers?" said the old earl from the table; "was it?"

She swung about toward him and looked swiftly from his face to Ashton Beresford's and back again. Her eyes were wide and burning and hunted, like those of an animal which is sore pressed.

"Lying?" she whispered, hoarsely, and waited to steady her voice, "lying? Yes, it was lying! yes, yes, of

course it was lying! Did you think I was guilty of what they said—the witnesses, those horrible witnesses? I was innocent, I say, innocent! Oh, don't you believe me? Ask—ask him! ask Ashton Beresford! Tony, Tony, tell them that I was innocent! Oh, that you could think such things! I—I swear I was innocent!"

"Dimmesdale!" said the old earl, raising his voice a little; "Dimmesdale!" The hangings beyond parted for an instant to admit the painter, who stood, white and haggard, behind the earl's chair.

"Harry! Harry!" screamed the woman, and sprang swiftly to her feet and started toward him; but she fell forward, tripping on her skirt, and caught herself with her hands against the edge of the table. And she clung there, shaking from head to foot, her face hidden on her arms.

Madame de Brissal left her chair by the door, where she had sat frightened and silently weeping through all the tense scene, and sank on her knees beside the crouching woman, slipping her arms about the bowed shoulders and murmuring comfort into the heedless ears, as one murmurs to a frenzied child.

But Mrs. Marlowe put her aside and lifted her white face desperately.

"It's a lie!" she cried, choking with her sobs; "it's all a horrible lie! Don't believe what he has told you. He's lying, lying! He always was a liar! He lied to me in the first place and when the thing all came out he ran away, and he lied to me afterward. Don't believe him. Ah, to think that I loved him once! I tell you, it's all a lie!" Then she dropped her face once more on her arms and fell to weeping and shivering as she crouched beside the table.

Dimmesdale came forward a little from behind the earl's chair and looked toward Lord Stratton.

"I was the man, sir," he said, in a low tone, "who made it possible for Colonel Travers to obtain his divorce. It was I who was seen by the witnesses in company with Mrs. Travers—it was

not Beresford! It was I who ran away at the time the case came up, leaving Beresford, who was innocent, to face what I should have faced. I was his friend and I have continued to be his friend, outwardly, since then, for he has never known what I did. He has never known that Mrs. Travers was guilty of what they charged against her. That is why he offered to marry her, because he thought that she was innocent and that her life had been unjustly wrecked. He offered to marry her and she would not accept because she—she loved me at that time and hoped that I would marry her. She did not know quite what a coward and blackguard I was, or, knowing, would not believe it. Afterward she came to love him, Beresford, remembering what he had borne for her. She loved him more, I think, than she ever loved me, but she knew that he did not love her. I suppose that is why she tried to ruin him in your eyes. Women can be unbelievably cruel to those they love. That is all the story, sir. I have been a coward and a scoundrel and worse. I have betrayed and deserted a woman and I have left a friend to suffer for my sins, but I have not been altogether free from suffering myself. I have lived in hell for five years. Thank God, it is to come to an end, this living lie, this whited sepulchre of a life!"

He had fallen to pacing up and down the room and his calmness had given way to an excitement that was on the verge of hysteria. His hands worked and twisted and his forehead shone wet in the cross light from the candles.

"Thank God, it is over!" he cried again. "At least, I can be honest and open in my villainy now. I can be known for the blackguard that I am. I tell you I have lived in hell! I could not have borne it much longer. Thank God that in unmasking I can be of actual service where a service is needed!" He turned with bowed head and went out of the room, and young Beresford, catching the earl's eye, rose and left the room also.

Then, for a long time, no one spoke and nothing broke the silence in the room, save that now and then the woman, crouching at the end of the table, sobbed and moaned softly to herself, or Madame de Brissal, weeping by the doorway, spoke aloud in little protesting murmurs. But, at last, the old earl raised himself with a sigh.

"Is this true, Mrs. Travers?" he asked.

"Yes," said the woman, in a low, dead voice; "oh, yes, it is true. Why should I lie any further?"

"Then," said he, gravely, "this marriage cannot take place." She must, of course, already have realized this, but the words brought her head up with a desperate cry of protest.

"Oh, no, no," she cried; "don't say that! Oh, give me a chance to prove that I've left behind me all that could soil or degrade a woman. Give me a chance, some hope, some littlest hope! I am not a bad woman, Lord Strope. Oh, I'm not! I'm a better woman than many you know and meet and like. If I—if I was—wicked long ago, it was because I—was tempted, was offered a love that—that I knew better than to hope for at home. God in heaven! have I not suffered for what I did? Do you know how I have suffered for five years? You never suffered so in all your long life. Oh, why is a woman blackened and stained forever, degraded, damned because she has sinned once? Can she never be clean again? Can she not repent, oh, bitterly, bitterly? Why is the woman damned and the man forgiven, sir? No, no, no! don't cast me off utterly because of what I was. I'm not that sort of woman now, I swear to you I'm not. If I've lied to-night, it was to save myself from just what you are threatening now. You don't blame a trapped, cornered animal for fighting. Don't blame me for lying. I—I was so eager to put away all that past horror, to forget it, to make believe it had never been! I wanted to start a new, clean, peaceful life. That isn't so much to ask! Ah, don't refuse me! Give me a chance to show

that I am a good woman, that I can be faithful and pure and constant like other women. Oh, are you all so immaculate that you can turn a woman out into the world, out into despair and hopelessness, because she has erred once, long, long ago?"

Her sobbing had risen again with her voice and it shook all the frail body piteously.

The old earl raised his head and his face was very sad, but it was stern and inflexible.

"I did not make the law, my child," said he, "the great and ancient law that condemns the woman but not the man. Perhaps I should have made it differently, perhaps not. It is the law and we who live here must obey it."

"Monseigneur is right, *ma pauvre*," said Madame de Brissal, from her chair near the door. She had ceased weeping, but her voice still trembled and broke from time to time, for she was very much moved; "monseigneur is right, *ma pauvre*. Sin is a terrible thing, whether in a man or in a woman, but, I think, justly more terrible in a woman, for we are of finer flesh and we live not so exposed a life. They have a right, the men, to demand that the mothers of their sons and daughters shall have been honest women, and it would be a monstrous thing for a man to give his future innocent children a mother whose life had been impure." She crossed the room and stood beside the woman who crouched there, stroking the disheveled hair and the hot cheeks with her trembling old fingers.

"You are still a young woman, my child," she continued. "If you should marry Richard you might well expect to bear children. Dare you think of becoming the mother of Earls of Strope? Dare you think of bringing into the world daughters to be tainted by your early life? No, this marriage must not take place. They come of a proud old house, monseigneur and Richard. They bear a proud old name and it lays on them obligations. Oh, my child, it wrings my old woman's heart to say these things, but they

are true as death. The marriage must not take place."

But the other woman turned, still kneeling, and clasped the knees of the man she had promised to marry.

"Do you, too, cast me off, Richard?" she asked, very low, and she seemed to have gone beyond tears and sobbing into a place of deeper and more terrible grief. "Have you, as well, no pity? Are you, also, cold and just, terribly just? And do you cling to the law, which sees only one side? Oh, Richard, Richard, I should make you a faithful wife! I should bring you comfort and content and, I think, happiness. Do you cast me off, Richard? Aye, I know of what you are thinking. I loved Ashton Beresford. See! I am quite honest—I love him now, but he does not love me and I could not marry him. You cannot understand because you are a man. Oh, Richard, I should be a good wife to you, and I long so for peace, peace and quiet! Do you cast me off, Richard?"

Lord Stratton raised his face, white and drawn and haggard, and caught his father's eye.

"Leave us," he said; "leave us for a little." But the old earl came and stood over him, looking down very keenly into the younger man's face, and put out a hand upon the broad shoulder.

"There will be no weakening, no giving way?" he appealed.

"There will be no weakening," said Lord Stratton. Then the earl straightened up with a quick breath and, with Madame de Brissal, went softly out of the room, closing the door behind them.

The earl found the others, who had preceded him, in the wide salon with its white-and-gold furniture and the great mirror over the mantel-shelf. The old gentleman laid an elbow upon the mantel and rested his white head on his hand.

"It is a cruel law," said he, after a time, "but it is the law. All law is cruel. What will become of her? I have never liked her, but I am sorry for her, now. What will become of her?"

"I shall try to persuade her to marry me," said Dimmesdale. "I have always loved her as much as such a man as I can love. I was too much of a coward and too selfish to marry her before. After a time—not now—but after a time I think she will marry me. It is the only reparation I can make. Perhaps we shall be able, after all, to patch together something of a life. She is a good woman by nature. She told the truth about that."

Young Beresford had wandered restlessly out of the room, into the little hall that led out to the south terrace. Some one was coming down the stairs from above, some one all in white with certain roses. She halted a moment as she saw him in the dim light and then ran to him with a cry.

"Ah, *roi de mon cœur!*" she said, low and trembling, "you are back? You have come back to me?"

"I have come back to you, my queen," said he, and his own voice shook. He lifted her from the floor in his arms, holding her close against him, to look into her eyes.

"I shall never go away from you again, most beautiful," he said.

"For I should die, my king," whispered the most beautiful.

They went out into the cool, sweet moonlight that silvered the flagstoned terrace. There was no evidence left of the evening's rain save a little shining pool or two beside the gravel drive. There were stars in a sapphire sky, many millions of them, close at hand, and a warm breeze bore up from the west with a burden of roses and the sound of a voice that sang, to a mandolin, old songs, old as the walls of Monsigny.

Beresford glanced backward over his shoulder at the gloomy doorway. It was as if he had stepped out of the shadow of sin and jealousy and sorrow into the moon-bathed garden that was full of the scent of roses and the lilt of a voice that sang.

"Oh, most beautiful in all the world," said he; "clouds pass always, and the light shines again."

THE HOUSE OF PAIN

PAIN rears her castles where the mighty dwell,
 And side by side with them the humblest kneel;
 The trembling hands that grope in darkness feel
 Unyielding walls around their prison cell.
 She sits amid her rue and asphodel
 With sorrow on her distaff and her reel;
 Forever toiling at her loom and wheel,
 With warp and woof she weaves her grievous spell.

And yet, a captive in torn garments clad,
 Who, with uplifted face, goes singing by,
 Hath sometimes changed a bitter loss to gain;
 For God hath strangely mingled sweet with sad,
 And in the thorns a hidden rose may lie,
 Since Love lives ever in the House of Pain.

MYRTLE REED.



AT AN AFTERNOON TEA

THE only daughter of the miner from the West, who had been a day-laborer before he made his millions, was pouring tea that afternoon.

An Eastern exotic in spats, knowing the value of money in his business, had asked for an introduction. He was charmed by the accomplished manner in which she asked him if he would have a cup of tea, and bowed low to say that he would be only too happy.

"Will you take sugar in your'n?" she asked, sweetly.

Then for the first time he experienced the influence of her lineage.



THE LIMIT OF EXPRESSION

SNIFFKINS—So you don't consider Johnson reliable?

BLIFFKINS—Reliable! Why, man, he's as unreliable as an automobile!



UNKIND ADVICE

ELLA—How can I preserve the color of my hair?

STELLA—Don't leave it in the sun when you are not using it.

A MODERN DIALOGUE

By Oliver Herford

SCENE—*On Manhattan Island. Time—To-day.*
Hour—Ten-thirty. Persons of the play:

SIBYL. *A dream of beauty, half awake,
In filmy disarray—about to take
Her morning tub. In speech with her the while*
Is ROBERT. *He is dressed in riding style.*

SIBYL—Why, Bob, it's *you!* They got your name all wrong.
I'm sorry that I made you wait so long.

BOB— Only six minutes by my watch—it's true
A minute seems a year, awaiting you!
But Time is merciful and I rejoice
That I am still alive to hear your voice.

SIBYL—A very pretty speech, for you, indeed.
But what extenuation can you plead
For waking ladies at the break of day
From peaceful slumbers, sir!

BOB— Oh, come, I say!
It's half-past ten!

SIBYL— Well, it was nearly three
Before I got to bed!

BOB— Good gracious me!
I'm sure I'd no idea it was so late.
Why, I was riding in the Park at eight
And looked for you. I own I felt abused;
Last night you said——

SIBYL— I beg to be excused
From keeping foolish promises, when made
At two A.M., by moonlight. I'm afraid
My memory's no better than a sieve.
So you expected me? The Lord forgive
Your trusting soul!

BOB— It is His *métier!*

SIBYL—Don't be outrageous, or I'll run away.

BOB— Ah, no; don't go. I will be good, I swear!
'Twas a quotation, Heine, or Voltaire,
Or some fool cynic fellow. By the way,
If you have nothing on, what do you say
To breakfasting with Peg and me at noon
At the Casino?

SIBYL— Well, that's rather soon;
I can't be ready for an hour or more.

BOB— Come as you are, you know that I adore
Your ladyship in any sort of gown;
Besides, there's not another soul in town.
Come as you are; there'll only be we three.

THE SMART SET

SIBYL—Well, I like that! It's fortunate for me
 This is a telephone and not that new
 Invention one can talk and *see* through, too!
 What's that you said?

BOB— I didn't speak at all
 I only *thought*.

SIBYL— Well, *don't!* Suppose we call
 The breakfast half-past one instead of noon?

BOB (*joyously*)—
 Then you will come?

SIBYL— I swear!

BOB— Not by the moon?

SIBYL (*laughing*)—
 No, you may count on me. Now I must fly.
 One-thirty—don't forget—Good-bye!

BOB— Good-bye!
 (*They ring off.*)



NO PROTECTING ARM

MARJORIE—Miss Oldgirl fell out of a hammock the other day.
 MADGE—Was she awfully humiliated?
 "I should say so. It showed she hadn't a man with her."



A NEW GNU

THERE was once a gay young gnu,
 Who was captured and placed in a zoo;
 An old gnu was there,
 Who came from his lair
 To hear all the news that the new gnu knew.



AN INFERENCE

DITTYSMITH—I am offered five hundred dollars for my latest sentimental
 song.
 GRIMSHAW—Hush-money?



A LARGE safe was being hoisted through an office window and, as a precautionary measure, a sign had been placed on the sidewalk, reading: "Danger Below!" A wag, passing, wrote beneath, "Safe Above!"

THE DEAD AND THE COUNTESS

By Gertrude Atherton

IT was an old cemetery, and they had been long dead. Those who died nowadays were put in the new burying-place on the hill, close to the Bois d'Amour and within sound of the bells that called the living to mass. But the little church where the mass was celebrated stood faithfully beside the older dead; a new church, indeed, had not been built in that forgotten corner of Finisterre for centuries, not since the calvary on its pile of stones had been raised in the tiny square, surrounded then, as now, perhaps, by gray naked cottages; not since the castle with its round tower, down on the river, had been erected for the Counts of Croisac. But the stone walls inclosing that ancient cemetery had been kept in good repair and there were no weeds within, nor toppling head-stones. It looked cold and gray and desolate, like all the cemeteries of Brittany, but it was made hideous neither by tawdry gewgaws nor the license of time.

And sometimes it was close to a picture of beauty. When the village celebrated its yearly *pardon*, a great procession came out of the church—priests in glittering robes, flashing standards held aloft by young men in their gala costume of black and silver, and many maidens in flapping white head-dress and collar, black cloth frocks heavy with silver, and aprons flaunting with ribbons and lace. They marched, chanting, down the road beside the wall of the cemetery where lay the generations that in their day had held the banners and chanted the service of the *pardon*.

For the dead were peasants and priests—the Croisacs had their burying-place in a hollow of the hills behind the castle—old men and women who had wept and died for the fishermen that had gone to the *grande pêche* and returned no more, and now and again a child, slept there. Those who walked beside the dead at the *pardon*, or after the marriage ceremony, or took part in any one of the minor religious festivals with which the Catholic village enlivens its existence—all looked grave and sad, young and old. For the women from childhood know that their lot is to wait and dread and weep, and the men that the ocean is treacherous and cruel, but that bread can be wrung from no other master. Therefore, the living have little sympathy for the dead who have laid down their crushing burden; and the dead under their stones slumber contentedly enough. There is no envy among them for the young who wander at evening and pledge their troth in the Bois d'Amour, only pity for the groups of women who wash their linen in the creek that flows to the river. They look like pictures in the green quiet book of nature, these women, in their glistening white head-gear and deep collars; but the dead know better than to envy them, and the women—and the lovers—know better than to pity the dead.

The dead lay at rest in their boxes and thanked God they were quiet and had found everlasting peace.

And one day even this, for which they had patiently endured life, was taken from them.

The village was picturesque and there was none quite like it, even in Finisterre. Artists discovered it and made it famous. After the artists followed the tourists, and the old creaking *diligence* became an absurdity. Brittany was the fashion for three months of the year, and wherever there is fashion there is at least one railway. The one built to satisfy the thousands who wished to visit the wild, sad beauties of the west of France was laid along the road beside the little cemetery of this tale.

It takes a long while to awaken the dead. These heard neither the voluble workmen nor even the first snort of the engine. And, of course, they neither heard nor knew of the pleadings of the old priest that the line should be laid elsewhere. One night he came out into the old cemetery and sat on a grave and wept. For he loved his dead and felt it to be a tragic pity that the greed of money, and the fever of travel, and the petty ambitions of men whose place was in the great cities where such ambitions were born, should shatter forever the holy calm of those who had suffered so much on earth. He had known many of them in life, for he was very old; and although he believed, like all good Catholics, in heaven and purgatory and hell, yet he always saw his friends as he had buried them, peacefully asleep in their coffins, the souls lying with folded hands like the bodies that bore them, patiently awaiting the final call. He would never have told you, this good old priest, that he believed heaven to be a great echoing palace in which God and the archangels dwelt alone waiting for that great day when the elected dead should rise and enter the Presence together, for he was a simple old man who had read and thought little; but he had a zigzag of fancy in his humble mind and he saw his friends and his ancestors' friends as I have related to you, soul and body in the deep, undreaming sleep of death, but sleep, not a rotted body deserted by its affrighted mate;

and to all who sleep there comes, the sooner or later, the time of awakening.

He knew that they had slept through the wild storms that rage on the coast of Finisterre, when ships are flung on the rocks and trees crash down in the Bois d'Amour. He knew that the soft, slow chantings of the *pardon* never struck a chord in those frozen memories, meager and monotonous as their store had been; nor the bagpipes down in the open village hall—a mere roof on poles—when the bride and her friends danced for three days without a smile on their sad brown faces.

All this the dead had known in life and it could not disturb or interest them now. But that hideous intruder from modern civilization, a train of cars with a snorting engine, that would shake the earth which held them and rend the peaceful air with such discordant shrieks that neither dead nor living could sleep! His life had been one long, unbroken sacrifice, and he sought in vain to imagine one greater, which he would cheerfully assume could this disaster be spared his dead!

But the railway was built and the first night the train went screaming by, shaking the earth and rattling the windows of the church, he went out and sprinkled every grave with holy water.

And thereafter, twice a day, at dawn and at night as the train tore a noisy tunnel in the quiet air, like the plebeian upstart it was, he sprinkled every grave, rising sometimes from a bed of pain, at other times defying wind and rain and hail. And for a time he believed that his holy device had deepened the sleep of his dead, locked them beyond the power of man to awake. But one night he heard them muttering.

It was late. There were but a few stars in a black sky. Not a breath of wind came over the lonely plains beyond, or from the sea. There would be no wrecks to-night and all the world seemed at peace. The lights were out in the village. One burned

in the tower of Croisac where the young wife of the count lay ill. The priest had been with her when the train thundered by and she had whispered to him:

"Would that I were on it! Oh, this lonely, lonely land! this cold, echoing château, with no one to speak to day after day! If it kills me, *mon père*, make him lay me in the cemetery by the road, that twice a day I may hear the train go by—the train that goes to Paris! If they put me down there over the hill, I will shriek in my coffin every night."

The priest had ministered as best he could to the ailing soul of the young noblewoman, with whose like he seldom dealt, and hastened back to his dead. He mused, as he toiled along the dark road with rheumatic legs, on the fact that the woman should have the same fancy as himself.

"If she is really sincere, poor young thing," he thought aloud, "I will forbear to sprinkle holy water on her grave. For those who suffer while alive should have all they desire after death, and I am afraid the count neglects her. But I pray God that my dead have not heard that monster to-night." And he tucked his gown under his arm and hurriedly told his rosary.

But when he went about among the graves with the holy water he heard the dead muttering.

"Jean Marie," said a voice, fumbling among its unused tones for forgotten notes, "art thou ready? Surely that is the last call."

"Nay, nay," rumbled another voice, "that is not the sound of a trumpet, François. That will be sudden and loud and sharp, like the great blasts of the north when they come plunging over the sea from out the awful gorges of Iceland. Dost thou remember them, François? Thank the good God they spared us to die in our beds with our grandchildren about us and only the little wind sighing in the Bois d'Amour. Ah, the poor comrades that died in their manhood, that went to the *grande*

pêche once too often! Dost thou remember when the great wave curled round Ignace like his poor wife's arms, and we saw him no more? We clasped each others' hands, for we believed that we should follow, but we lived and went again and again to the *grande pêche*, and died in our beds. *Grâce à Dieu!*"

"Why dost thou think of that now—here in the grave where it matters not, even to the living?"

"I know not; but it was of that night when Ignace went down that I thought as the living breath went out of me. Of what didst thou think as thou layest dying?"

"Of the money I owed to Dominique and could not pay. I sought to ask my son to pay it, but death had come suddenly and I could not speak. God knows how they treat my name to-day in the village of St.-Hilaire."

"Thou art forgotten," murmured another voice. "I died forty years after thee and men remember not so long in Finisterre. But thy son was my friend and I remember that he paid the money."

"And my son, what of him? Is he, too, here?"

"Nay; he lies deep in the northern sea. It was his second voyage, and he had returned with a purse for the young wife, the first time. But he returned no more, and she washed in the river for the dames of Croisac and by-and-bye she died. I would have married her, but she said it was enough to lose one husband. I married another and she grew ten years in every three that I went to the *grande pêche*. Alas for Brittany, she has no youth!"

"And thou? Wert thou an old man when thou camest here?"

"Sixty. My wife came first, like many wives. She lies here. Jeanne!"

"Is't thy voice, my husband? Not the Lord Jesus Christ's? What miracle is this? I thought that terrible sound was the tramp of doom."

"It could not be, old Jeanne, for we are still in our graves. When the tramp sounds we shall have wings

and robes of light, and fly straight up to heaven. Hast thou slept well?"

"Aye! But why are we awakened? Is it time for purgatory? Or have we been there?"

"The good God knows. I remember nothing. Art frightened? Would that I could hold thy hand, as when thou didst slip from life into that long sleep thou didst fear yet welcome."

"I am frightened, my husband. But it is sweet to hear thy voice, hoarse and hollow as it is from the mould of the grave. Thank the good God thou didst bury me with the rosary in my hands," and she began telling the beads rapidly.

"If God is good," cried François, harshly, and his voice came plainly to the priest's ears as if the lid of the coffin had rotted, "why are we awakened before our time? What foul fiend was it that thundered and screamed through the frozen avenues of my brain? Has God, perchance, been vanquished and does the Evil One reign in His stead?"

"Tut! tut! Thou blasphemest! God reigns, now and always. It is but a punishment He has laid upon us for the sins of earth."

"Truly, we were punished enough before we descended to the peace of this narrow house. Ah, but it is dark and cold! Shall we lie like this for an eternity, perhaps? On earth we longed for death, but feared the grave. I would that I were alive again, poor and old and alone and in pain. It were better than this. Curse the foul fiend that woke us!"

"Curse not, my son," said a soft voice, and the priest stood up and uncovered and crossed himself, for it was the voice of his aged predecessor. "I cannot tell thee what this is that has rudely shaken us in our graves and freed our spirits of their blessed thralldom, and I like not the consciousness of this narrow house, this load of earth on my tired heart. But it is right, it must be right, or it would not be at all—ah, me!"

For a baby cried softly, hopelessly,

and from a grave beyond came a mother's anguished attempt to still it.

"Ah, the good God!" she cried. "I, too, thought it was the great call and that in a moment I should rise and find my child and go to my Ignace, my Ignace whose bones lie white on the floor of the sea. Will he find them, my father, when the dead shall rise again? To lie here and doubt!—that were worse than life."

"Yes, yes," said the priest; "all will be well, my daughter."

"But all is not well, my father, for my baby cries and is alone in a little box in the ground. If I could claw my way to her with my hands—but my old mother lies between us."

"Tell your beads!" commanded the priest, sternly; "tell your beads, all of you. All ye that have not your beads, say the 'Hail, Mary!' one hundred times."

Immediately a rapid, monotonous muttering arose from every lonely chamber of that desecrated ground. All obeyed but the baby, who still moaned with the hopeless grief of deserted children. The living priest knew that they would talk no more that night, and went into the church to pray till dawn. He was sick with horror and terror, but not for himself. When the sky was pink and the air full of the sweet scents of morning, and a piercing scream tore a rent in the early silences, he hastened out and sprinkled his graves with a double allowance of holy water. The train rattled by with two short, derisive shrieks, and before the earth had ceased to tremble the priest laid his ear to the ground. Alas, they were still awake!

"The fiend is on the wing again," said Jean Marie; "but as he passed I felt as if the finger of God touched my brow. It can do us no harm."

"I, too, felt that heavenly caress," exclaimed the old priest. "And I!" "And I!" "And I!" came from every grave but the baby's.

The priest of earth, deeply thankful that his simple device had comforted them, went rapidly down the

road to the castle. He forgot that he had not broken his fast or slept. The count was one of the directors of the railroad and he would make a final appeal.

It was early, but no one slept at Croisac. The young countess was dead. A great bishop had arrived in the night and administered extreme unction. The priest hopefully asked if he might venture into the presence of the bishop. After a long wait in the kitchen, he was told that he could speak with the bishop. He followed the servant up the wide spiral stair of the tower and from its twenty-eighth step entered a room hung with purple cloth stamped with golden fleurs-de-lis. The bishop lay six feet above the floor on one of the splendid carved cabinet beds that are built against the walls in Brittany. Heavy curtains shaded his cold, white face. The priest, who was small and bowed, felt immeasurably below that august presence and sought for words.

"What is it, my son?" asked the bishop, in his cold, weary voice. "Is the matter so pressing? I am very tired."

Brokenly, nervously, the priest told his story, and as he strove to convey the tragedy of the tormented dead he not only felt the poverty of his expression—for he was little used to narrative—but the torturing thought assailed him that what he said sounded wild and unnatural, real as it was to him. But he was not prepared for the effect on the bishop. He was standing in the middle of the room, whose gloom was softened and gilded by the waxen candles of a huge candelabra. His eyes, which had wandered unseeing from one massive piece of carved furniture to another, suddenly lit on the bed and he stopped abruptly, his tongue rolling out. The bishop was sitting up, livid with wrath.

"And this was thy matter of life and death, thou prating madman!" he thundered. "For this string of foolish lies I am kept from my rest, as if I were another old lunatic like thyself! Thou art not fit to be a priest and have the care of souls. To-morrow——"

But the priest had fled, wringing his hands.

As he stumbled down the winding stair he ran straight into the arms of the count. Monsieur de Croisac had just closed a door behind him. He opened it and, leading the priest into the room, pointed to his dead countess, who lay high up against the wall, her hands clasped, unmindful forevermore of the six feet of carved cupids and lilies that upheld her. On high pedestals at head and foot of her magnificent couch the candles burned in tarnished golden candle-sticks. The blue hangings of the room, with their white fleurs-de-lis, were faded, like the rugs on the old, dim floor; for the splendor of the Croisacs had departed with the Bourbons. The count lived in the old château because he must; but he reflected bitterly to-night that, if he had made the mistake of bringing a young girl to it, there were several things he might have done to save her from despair and death.

"Pray for her," he said to the priest. "And you will bury her in the old cemetery. It was her last request."

He went out, and the priest sank on his knees and mumbled his prayers for the dead. But his eyes wandered to the high narrow windows through which the countess had stared for hours and days, stared at the fishermen sailing north for the *grande pêche*, followed along the shore of the river by wives and mothers, until their boats were caught in the great waves of the ocean beyond; often at nothing more animate than the dark flood, the wooded banks and ruins beyond. The priest had eaten nothing since his meager breakfast at twelve the day before and his imagination was active. He wondered if the soul up there rejoiced in the death of the beautiful, restless body, the passionate, brooding mind. He could not see her face from where he knelt, only the waxen hands clasping a crucifix. He wondered if the face were peaceful in death, or peevish and angry as when he had seen it last. If the great change had smoothed and sealed it,

then perhaps the soul would sink deep under the dark waters, grateful for oblivion, and that cursed train could not awaken it for years to come. Curiosity succeeded wonder. He cut his prayers short, got to his weary, swollen feet and pushed a chair to the bed. He mounted it and his face was close to the dead woman's. Alas! it was not peaceful. It was stamped with the tragedy of a bitter renunciation. After all, she had been young and at the last had died unwillingly. There was still a fierce tenseness about the nostrils and her upper lip was curled as if her last word had been an imprecation. But she was very beautiful, despite the emaciation of her features. Her black hair nearly covered the bed, and her lashes looked too heavy for her sunken cheeks.

"*Pauvre petite!*" thought the priest. "No, she will not rest, nor would she wish to. I will not sprinkle holy water on her grave. It is wondrous that monster can give comfort to any one, but if it can, so be it."

He went into the little oratory adjoining the bedroom and prayed more fervently. But when the watchers came an hour later they found him in a stupor, huddled at the foot of the altar.

When he awoke he was in his own bed in his little house beside the church. But it was four days before they would let him rise to go about his duties, and by that time the countess was in her grave.

The old housekeeper left him to take care of himself. He waited eagerly for the night. It was raining thinly, a gray, quiet rain that blurred the landscape and soaked the ground in the Bois d'Amour. It was wet about the graves, too; but the priest had given little heed to the elements in his long life of crucified self, and as he heard the remote echo of the evening train he hastened out with his holy water and had sprinkled every grave but one when the train sped by.

Then he knelt and listened eagerly.

It was five days since he had knelt there last. Perhaps they had sunk again to rest. In a moment he wrung his hands and raised them to heaven. All the earth beneath him was filled with lamentation. They wailed for mercy, for peace, for rest; they cursed the foul fiend who had shattered the locks of death; and among the voices of men and women and children the priest distinguished the quavering notes of his aged predecessor; not cursing, but praying with bitter entreaty. The baby was screaming with the accents of mortal terror and its mother was too frantic to care.

"Alas," cried the voice of Jean Marie, "that they never told us what purgatory was like! What do the priests know? When we were threatened with punishment of our sins not a hint did we have of this. To sleep for a few hours, haunted with the moment of awakening! Then a cruel insult from the earth that is tired of us, and the orchestra of hell. Again! and again! and again! Oh, God! How long? how long?"

The priest stumbled to his feet and ran over graves and paths to the mound above the countess. There he would hear a voice praising the monster of night and dawn, a note of content in this terrible chorus of despair which he believed would drive him mad. He vowed that on the morrow he would move his dead, if he had to unbury them with his own hands and carry them up the hill to graves of his own making.

For a moment he heard no sound. He knelt and laid his ear to the grave, then pressed it more closely and held his breath. A long rumbling moan reached it, then another and another. But there were no words.

"Is she moaning in sympathy with my poor friends?" he thought; "or have they terrified her? Why does she not speak to them? Perhaps they would forget their plight were she to tell them of the world they have left so long. But it was not their world. Perhaps it is that dis-

tresses her, for she will be lonelier here than on earth. Ah!"

A sharp, horrified cry pierced to his ears, then a gasping shriek, and another; all dying away in a dreadful, smothered rumble.

The priest rose and wrung his hands, looking to the wet skies for inspiration.

"Alas!" he sobbed, "she is not content. She has made a terrible mistake. She would rest in the deep, sweet peace of death, and that monster of iron and fire and the frantic dead about her are tormenting a soul so tormented in life. There may be rest for her in the vault behind the castle, but not here. I know, and I shall do my duty—now, at once."

He gathered his robes about him and ran as fast as his old legs and rheumatic feet would take him toward the château, whose lights gleamed through the rain. As he ran along the bank of the river he met a fisherman and begged to be taken by boat to the château. The fisherman wondered, but picked the priest up in his strong arms, lowered him into the boat and rowed swiftly toward the sea. When they landed he tied his boat.

"I will wait for you in the kitchen, my father," he said; and the priest blessed him and hurried up to the castle.

Once more he entered through the door of the great kitchen, with its blue tiles, its glittering brass and bronze warming-pans which had comforted nobles and monarchs in the days of Croisac splendor. He sank into a chair beside the stove while a maid hastened to the count. She returned while the priest was still shivering and announced that her master would see his holy visitor in the library.

It was a dreary room where the count sat waiting for the priest and it smelt of musty calf, for the books on the shelves were old. A few novels and newspapers lay on the heavy table, a fire burned on the andirons, but the paper on the wall was very

dark and the fleurs-de-lis tarnished and dull. The count, when at home, divided his time between this library and the water, when he could not chase the boar or the stag in the forests. But he often went to Paris, where he could afford the life of a bachelor in a wing of his great hotel; he had known too much of the extravagance of women to give his wife the key of the faded salons. He had loved the beautiful girl when he married her, but her repinings and bitter discontent had alienated him and during the past year he had held himself aloof from her in sullen resentment. Too late he understood and dreamed passionately of atonement. She had been a high-spirited, brilliant, eager creature and her active mind had dwelt constantly on the world she had vividly enjoyed for one year. And he had given her so little in return!

He rose as the priest entered, and bowed low. The visit bored him, but the good old priest commanded his respect; moreover, he had performed many offices and rites in his family. He moved a chair toward his guest, but the old man shook his head and nervously twisted his hands together.

"Alas, *monsieur le comte*," he said, "it may be that you, too, will tell me that I am an old lunatic, as did the bishop. Yet, I must speak, even if you tell your servants to fling me out of the château."

The count had started slightly. He recalled certain acid comments of the bishop, followed by a statement that a young *curé* should be sent gently to supersede the old priest, who was in his dotage. But he replied, suavely:

"You know, my father, that no one in this castle will ever show you disrespect. Say what you wish; have no fear. But will you not sit down? I am very tired."

The priest took the chair and fixed his eyes appealingly on the count.

"It is this, *monsieur*." He spoke rapidly, lest his courage go. "That terrible train, with its brute of iron and live coals and foul smoke and

screeching throat, has awakened my dead. I guarded them with holy water and they heard it not, until one night when I missed—I was with madame as the train shrieked by, shaking the nails out of the coffins. I hurried back, but the mischief was done, the dead were awake, the dear sleep of eternity was shattered. They thought it was the last trump and wondered why they still were in their graves. But they talked together and it was not so bad at the first. But now they are frantic. They are in hell, and I have come to beseech you to see that they are moved far up on the hill. Ah, think, think, monsieur, what it is to have the last long sleep of the grave so rudely disturbed—the sleep for which we live and endure so patiently!”

He stopped abruptly and caught his breath. The count had listened without change of countenance, convinced that he was facing a madman. But the farce wearied him and involuntarily his hand had moved toward a bell on the table.

“Ah, monsieur, not yet! not yet!” panted the priest. “It is of the countess I came to speak. I had forgotten. She told me she wished to lie there and listen to the train go by to Paris, so I sprinkled no holy water on her grave. But she, too, is wretched and horror-stricken, monsieur. She moans and screams. Her coffin is new and strong, and I cannot hear her words,

but I have heard those frightful sounds from her grave to-night, monsieur; I swear it on the cross. Ah, monsieur, thou dost believe me at last!”

For the count, as white as the woman had been in her coffin and shaking from head to foot, had staggered from his chair and was staring at the priest as if he saw the ghost of his countess.

“You heard——?” he gasped.

“She is not at peace, monsieur. She moans and shrieks in a terrible, smothered way, as if a hand were on her mouth——”

But he had uttered the last of his words. The count had suddenly recovered himself and dashed from the room. The priest passed his hand across his forehead and sank slowly to the floor.

“He will see that I spoke the truth,” he thought, as he fell asleep, “and tomorrow he will intercede for my poor friends.”

The priest lies high on the hill where no train will ever disturb him and his old comrades of the violated cemetery are close about him. For the Count and Countess of Croisac, who adore his memory, hastened to give him in death what he most had desired in the last of his life. And with them all things are well, for a man, too, may be born again, and without descending into the grave.



THEN AND NOW

HOW things will evolve and turn,
As march the decades slow!
Our fathers wore three-cornered hats
A hundred years ago.

But that was in the by-gone days,
And time has changed all that—
Each man himself is cornered now
To get his wife a hat!

McLANDBURGH WILSON.

A HEDGE, COWS—AND JANE!

By Rosamond Napier

SHE came slowly down-stairs to where he was patiently waiting. Her bright hair was twisted high on her charming head; she wore the freshest of muslins and a large hat gay with pink and yellow roses. I was "he," and "she" was Jane.

You know that little pucker of irritation she gets between those extremely arched eyebrows of hers? Well, she had it then and was evidently in her most provoking mood.

"Bob," said she, "a walk with you always upsets me, but, to start in grilling sunshine, why '*cela attire le diable*.'" And she unfurled her rose-colored parasol, thereby nearly poking my eye out.

We started in an ominous silence. Then, as we turned into a wide open field, she remarked:

"How much better I should like the Summer if it came in the Winter."

"I am afraid that's not original."

"Is anything? Even the Lord Himself made man after His own image!"

"Neither is that," I returned, provokingly.

"Oh, bother! Well, I hate your original woman. She has her hair too tight and her stays too loose, and uses large plain handkerchiefs. You can say what you please, I am infinitely preferable."

I maintained a discreet and, I hope, dignified silence.

"If I say the country would be a great deal more enjoyable if it grew in the town, I suppose you will admit that is original."

"You must make allowances for Providence. In arranging things as

they are it probably acts up to its own lights," I urged.

"Must be night lights then," snapped Jane.

The whole of the three weeks she had been visiting us she had occupied herself in two ways. They were—abusing the country and flirting outrageously with me. Now, she could rail at the woods, the fields, the roads, just as much as she pleased, but I was resolved that she should not make a fool of me any longer.

So, as I watched her pick her way daintily along, her skirts held high, displaying ridiculously tiny feet, shod in the thinnest of patent-leather shoes, I determined, by fair means or foul, to get the answer I wanted that very afternoon.

It struck me that a few ferocious-looking Devon bullocks might be useful accessories to my wooing. Hence the turning from the seductive shade of the lane into that sun-baked field.

The sky was like an inverted bowl of lapis lazuli, in the midst of which the sun was glowing and burning. The short grass, as it grew, was frizzled rust-color, and a pungent crowd of sheep were huddled in the narrow strip of shade afforded by the hedge—the hedge. Their topaz eyes were closed; their mouths were open, showing the cold, dry, black tongue, and their woolly sides throbbed at every breath, in a way exhausting even to look at. In the sunshine stood the little clump of cattle that were presently to play so important a part. Their red sides shone like ripe chestnuts and their shadows lay beneath them in blots of pure cobalt. I carefully

kept Jane's parasol between her and them. Had she espied them, wild horses would not have dragged her into that field.

My time had come. I caught hold of her hand. "Jane, you know that I love you—that——"

"Oh, do be careful! You are treading on my dress with your great muddy boot."

"For the last three weeks you—I mean I——"

Jane pulled out her watch. "You may have one minute, and no more."

"I won't be put off like this!" Then, throwing as much tenderness into my voice as possible: "Little Janie, will you marry me?"

"Don't be absurd, Boblet. Jane Raikes! Hark to the irredeemable scratchiness of it!"

"How can you trifle like this?" I cried, bitterly wounded.

"Don't be cross or I shall burst into tears," with a charming smile.

"Once more, will——?"

"No, I will not!" And she stamped her foot and made a grimace at me.

In anger that was partly real and partly feigned I turned on my heel and left her.

With a great air of nonchalance Jane proceeded on her way, her pink sunshade twirling carelessly as it rested on her shoulder.

And now the hedge comes in. The hedge was of thorn and thick and close. It divided the field into which I stalked from that which Jane was sauntering so airily across. I walked parallel with her unconscious little self. There was only the hedge between us.

Presently I noticed, to my delight, that she had become disagreeably aware of the proximity of twelve, fifteen, sixteen—twenty young bullocks and heifers which I knew she would indiscriminately class as *cows*—a word that never failed to strike terror into her jaunty little heart. They stood there, blowing and stamping, a fidgety, sun-lit, red bunch of straight backs, curving horns, angles and swishing tails.

She waited, a pitiable little figure of indecision. I wondered why she did not beat a hasty retreat. It then occurred to me that her dread of appealing to me was worse even than *cows*.

Her pride was always abnormal.

Poor little Jane! She was hiding her pink parasol behind her and looking anxiously for some means of escape. I was so close I could even see, through the serrated thorn leaves, the teeth of the tortoise-shell combs that pushed her dark hair so loosely around her face.

One good-tempered-looking bullock, which seemed to have come straight off a mustard tin, moved cautiously toward her. Jane hastily backed and one foot went splash into a muddy puddle left by last night's rain.

Through the hedge I heard a suspicious little sniff, as she cried: "Go away!"

The bullock merely stared. And a Devon bullock, with its ugly, pink-rimmed eyes, can do a great deal that way. Meditatively it chewed its cud and from its shiny pink muzzle long threads of froth swung and dangled.

Jane turned her small head from side to side.

"You may as well show yourself. You needn't think I can't see you, because I can."

But I was not to be beguiled by these arts.

"Bob, do you hear me, I say? This is childish. I can see you perfectly well," and she gazed vaguely around the points of the compass.

"Bo-o-o-obl!" in a very quavering voice.

That tremulous little cry nearly melted me; but I thought a moment or two more of anxiety for Bob's company would be beneficial.

"I never thought he would really leave me!" And this time there was the unmistakable sound of tears.

The bullock took a step forward and see-sawed its head up and down in the idiotic way bullocks have. I suppose it wished us to think it was full of chocolates.

"Shoo!" cried Jane, piteously.

The whole herd now turned a phalanx of wide, flat faces on her. The orifices of their ears were set to catch the slightest sound this strange creature might make, and their evil-looking horns gleamed yellow-white in the afternoon sunshine.

One by one they slowly advanced, then stopped—then on again, then stopped—and then on.

Jane squeezed her back against the hedge. A straggling wild-rose bramble half lifted her hat off her head, and I heard her frightened little gasp.

It was all I could do to resist shoving my great fist through to catch hold of her poor little hand.

The farmer's daughter had many pets in this bovine crowd. A pretty little heifer came up at a slow swinging walk. Coyly, and with a great deal of loud snuffing, she stretched out her damp pink nose and touched Jane gently on the sleeve.

"Oh!" she screamed, and shrank back into the hedge.

In a burst of remorse and tenderness I was on the point of calling out reassuringly, when Dick Holland galloped up, on his little gray mare.

You know Dick, that good-looking young fellow with the walnut-colored face, the bright light-blue eyes, and the flash of white teeth? He is the squire's son and, as I then fancied, my rival.

I awaited events. He charged straight into the herd. The friendly beasts went careering about the field, their legs swinging out in all directions and their tails kinked high in the air. I nearly burst out laughing at their idiotic gyrations, but fortunately restrained myself.

"Beauty in distress!" cried Dick, swinging off his mare.

"The devil take his impudence!" from me.

"And valor to the rescue!" And though I could see only her back hair and that preposterous hat, I knew just the coquettish way she was screwing up her eyes, partly to

keep the sun out, partly to hide the tears.

Listeners never hear any good of themselves; but then, you know, if you don't listen you never hear anything at all! As I said before, I was determined to have Jane by fair means or foul. So I listened.

"I know I'm a fright," she went on. "Tears are so unbecoming, aren't they? Is my nose red? And, oh, do look at my shoe!"

I saw her thrust out the mud-splattered little foot. Then, as well as intervening leaves and branches permitted, I watched Dick gallantly fall on one knee, reverently take off the muddied little affair and begin to polish it gently with a snowy silk handkerchief.

Jane, sitting there with her little stockinged foot poised in the air, began to flirt abominably.

"I can't understand your being here all alone," he whispered, presently.

"Oh, can't you, you silly idiot, you!" wrathfully to myself.

"Bob did start with me," she began, airily, "but he lost his temper over something—I can't think what—and left me by my little lone."

I began to think that beastly proverb was true; and I was certain of it when Dick growled out:

"Just the sort of thing an ill-mannered cub like that would do, confound him!" And he polished the shoe till he became red in the face.

I could no longer see Jane. She had sprung to her feet and leaves came in the way.

"How dare you speak like that of Mr. Raikes!" And every word thrilled with indignation.

Dick looked back at her.

"I beg your pardon," he began, awkwardly enough. "I'd no idea he was such a friend of yours."

I felt that Jane was drawing herself up to her full height by the way she spoke the following three words:

"We are engaged!"

"Picture to yourself my amazement! It was certainly the first I had ever heard of it.

"Engaged?" repeated Dick, with all the light dying from his blue eyes and his mouth growing tight and grim.

For the first time I realized what a cur's part I was playing. I told myself as firmly as possible, "'All's fair in love and war;'" but I must frankly own it was not a success. I felt a worm.

Without another word Dick turned. Roughly he chucked up his mare's head, who had been cropping surreptitiously at the sunburnt grass, swung himself into the saddle and galloped away.

"You have got my shoe," cried Jane after him, hysterically.

But he never turned his head, and I doubt if he even heard.

I waited till the drumming of hoofs had died away into the distance. Then I began forcing my way feverishly through that hedge.

"Goodness gracious! What's that?" cried Jane, hopping out into the middle of the road with one little silk-stockinged foot in her hand.

No doubt she expected to see bullocks behind as well as before.

Those beastly brambles tore my clothes, my skin, my hair. But what cared I?

"Jane!" And I caught her in my arms and kissed her.

"How dare you!" she exclaimed, struggling to free herself.

"But we are engaged, my sweet!"

"Engaged! Who said so, I should like to know!" growing very pink.

"You—you!"

The sunshine came out all over her face.

"Oh, you ugly monster, how I hate you!" and a mass of spiky artificial foliage was suddenly thrust under my chin as Jane hid her face on my shoulder.



WHITE VIOLETS

WHITE violets for one who is most white!
 These captured snow-flakes I shall send to her,
 And each will be a little messenger
 To tell of love and all love's wondrous light.

White on her breast, white ladye of my heart,
 These little dreams of beauty she will wear;
 And one, perchance, will nestle in her hair,
 Whose darkened threads are of the night a part.

White blossoms for one whiter than the snow,
 I send them with a word of tenderness,
 That they to her my white thoughts may confess,
 And whisper all the white love she should know.

R. S.



HEARD IN A BOOK-STORE

"I SUPPOSE that work in sixty volumes is an encyclopedia."
 "No; it is called 'The Love Letters of a Mormon Elder.'"

IN THE SUMMER OF SAINT MARTIN

By James Branch Cabell

M R. ERWYN sighed profoundly as he ended his recital—half for pity of the misguided folk who had afforded Tunbridge its latest scandal, half for relief that, in spite of many difficulties, the story had been clearly set forth in discreet language that veiled, if it did not quite conceal, certain unsavory details.

"And so," said he, "poor Harry is run through the lungs, and Mrs. Anstruther is to be allowed a separate maintenance."

"'Tis shocking!" said Lady Allonby.

"'Tis incredible," said Mr. Erwyn, "to my mind, at least, that the bonds of matrimony should be slipped thus lightly. But the age is somewhat lax and the world now views with complaisance the mad antics of half-grown lads and wenches, who trip to the altar as carelessly as to a country-dance."

Lady Allonby stirred her tea reflectively and said nothing. Her own marriage had been notoriously unhappy, and two years of widowhood since the seizure, brought on by an inherited tendency to apoplexy and French brandy, which carried off Sir Stephen Allonby, of Allonby Shaw, had not, to all appearances, tempered her aversion to the matrimonial state. Certain it was that she had refused many advantageous offers during that time, for her jointure was considerable and, though in candid moments she confessed to thirty-five, her dearest friends could not question her beauty. Her exculpation was that she desired to devote herself to her stepdaughter, but, as gossip had it at Tunbridge, she was like to be soon deprived of this subterfuge; for Miss Allonby had

reached her twentieth year and the two ladies were rarely seen in public save in the company of Mr. Erwyn, who, it was generally conceded, stood high in their favor and was desirous of mounting yet further.

For these reasons Lady Allonby heard with interest his feeling allusion to the laxity of the age, and pondered thereon for a moment, not doubting that he had lingered after the departure of her other guests in order to make the disclosure that she had been long expecting.

"I had not thought," said she, at length, "that you, of all men, would ever cast a serious eye toward marriage. Indeed, Mr. Erwyn, you have loved women so long that I must question your ability to love a woman, and your amours have been a by-word these twenty years."

"Dear lady," said Mr. Erwyn, "surely you would not confound amour with love? Believe me, the translation is inadequate. Amour is but the Summer wave that lifts and glitters and laughs in the sunlight for a moment, and disappears; but love is the unfathomed, eternal sea itself. Amour is a general under whom youth must serve for a little, and it is well to fight under his colors; for it is against ennui that he marshals his forces. 'Tis a glorious conflict, and young blood cannot but stir and exult as paradoxes, marching and countermarching at his command, make way for one another in iridescent squadrons, while through the steady musketry of epigrams one hears the clash of contending repartees, the cry of a wailing sonnet. But he may

be served by the young alone, and the veteran, grown old in service, is glad to relinquish the glory and splendor of the battle for some quiet ingle-nook, where, with love to make a third, he prattles of past days and deeds with one that goes hand in hand with him toward the tomb."

Lady Allonby accorded this conceit the tribute of a sigh; then glanced toward her four impassive footmen to make sure they were out of earshot.

"And so—?" said she.

"Faith," said Mr. Erwyn, "I thought you had known it long since."

"Indeed," said she, reflectively, "I dare say it is quite time."

"I am not," said Mr. Erwyn, "in the heyday of my youth, I grant you; but I am not for that reason necessarily unmoved by the attractions of an advantageous person, a fine sensibility and all the graces."

He sipped his tea with an air of partial resentment, and Lady Allonby, remembering the disparity of age that existed between Mr. Erwyn and her stepdaughter, felt that she had awkwardly blundered upon forbidden ground and awaited with contrition the proposal she did not doubt he was about to broach to her, as the head of the family.

"Who is she?" said Lady Allonby.

"An angel," said Mr. Erwyn, fencing.

"Beware," said Lady Allonby, "lest she prove a recording angel; a wife who takes too deep an interest in your movements will scarcely suit you."

"I trust," said Mr. Erwyn, smiling, "that she will allow me the usual half-holiday on Saturday."

Lady Allonby, rebuffed, sought consolation among the conserves.

"And yet," said Mr. Erwyn, "I do not seek a wife who will take her morning chocolate with me and sup with heaven knows whom. I have seen too much of *mariage à la mode*; and I come to her, if not with the transports of an Amadis, at least with an entire adoration and respect."

"Then," said Lady Allonby, "you love her?"

"Very tenderly," said Mr. Erwyn; "and, indeed, I would, for her sake, that the errors of my past life were not so numerous, nor the frailty of my aspiring resolutions rendered apparent—ah, so many times!—to a gaping and censorious world. For, as you know, I cannot offer her an untried heart; 'tis somewhat worn by many barterings. But I know that it beats very strongly in her presence, and when I come to her some day and clasp her in my arms, as I mean to do, I trust that her lips may not turn away from mine and that she may be glad that I am there and that her heart may sound an echoing chime. For, indeed, I love her as I have loved no other woman; and that, I think, you cannot doubt."

"I?" said Lady Allonby, innocently. "How should I know?"

"Unless you are blind," said Mr. Erwyn—"and I know those great eyes to be more keen than the tongue of a dowager—you must have seen of late that I have dared to hope—to think—that she whom I love so tenderly might deign to be that affectionate, that condescending friend who will assist me to retrieve the indiscretions of my youth—and who——"

The confusion of his utterance, that went far toward attesting his emotion, moved Lady Allonby. "It is true," said she, "that I——"

"Anastasia," said Mr. Erwyn, with feeling, "is not our friendship of an age that warrants sincerity?"

Lady Allonby was stirred to dispel his evident embarrassment. "Indeed," said she, frankly, "I have not been blind, and I do not object—and I do not think that Dorothy will prove obdurate."

"You render me the happiest of men," said Mr. Erwyn, rapturously. Then he asked: "You have, then, already discussed this matter with Miss Allonby?"

"Not precisely," said she, laughing; "I had thought it was apparent to the most timid lover that the first

announcement came with best grace from him."

"Is her consent, then, absolutely necessary?" said Mr. Erwyn, laughing likewise.

"Surely," said she.

"As you will," said he; then asked: "You have no reason to fear her opposition?"

"No," replied Lady Allonby. "Still——"

"I shall be a veritable Demosthenes," said Mr. Erwyn, "and I am sure that she will consent."

"Your conceit," said Lady Allonby, "is appalling."

"'Tis fearful," admitted Mr. Erwyn, "but I propose to try marriage as a remedy. I have heard it is an excellent one."

"Not always," said she, lightly, "for——"

"It is true," said he, "that you have been married——"

"George!" cried Lady Allonby.

"Pardon me," said Mr. Erwyn; "but, indeed, I find that perfect felicity is more potent than wine. Were it not for the footmen there," said he, joyously, "I do not know to what lengths I might go."

"In that case," laughed Lady Allonby, "I shall fetch Dorothy to you, that the crown may be set upon your happiness. And previously I shall dismiss the footmen." She did so with a sign.

"Believe me," said Mr. Erwyn, "'tis what I have long desired. And when Miss Allonby honors me with her attention I shall, since my life's happiness depends on the issue, plead with all the eloquence of a starveling barrister, big with the import of his first case. May I, indeed, rest assured that my triumph over her possible objections may not be viewed with unfavorable eyes?"

"Dear George," said Lady Allonby, "believe me, there is nothing I desire more earnestly than that you may obtain all that is necessary for your happiness, even though—I will fetch Dorothy."

"Hexcuse me, sir," said the largest footman but one, "'ave you done with your cup?"

II

MR. ERWYN, left alone, smiled at his own reflection in the mirror; rearranged his ruffles with a deft and shapely hand; consulted his watch; seated himself and hummed a merry air, in meditative wise; took counsel with his watch once more, and smiled.

Then the bright hangings that shielded the hall door quivered, broke into tumultuous waves and yielded up Miss Allonby, who cried, with an emphasis that dowagers found hoydenish and young men adorable:

"Heavens! What can it be, Mr. Erwyn, that has cast mother into such an unprecedented state of excitement?"

"What, indeed?" said he, bowing over her proffered hand.

"For, like a hurricane, she burst into my room and cried, 'Mr. Erwyn has something of importance to declare to you—why did you put on that gown?—bless you, my child—' all in one eager breath; then kissed me, powdered my nose and despatched me to you without explanation. And why?" said Miss Allonby.

"Why, indeed?" said Mr. Erwyn.

"'Tis very annoying," said she, decisively.

"Sending you to me?" said Mr. Erwyn, a world of reproach in his voice.

"That," said Miss Allonby, "I can pardon—very easily. But I dislike all mysteries, and being termed a child, and——"

"Yes?" said Mr. Erwyn.

"—being powdered on the nose," said Miss Allonby, with firmness. Then she went to the mirror and, standing on the tips of her toes, peered anxiously into its depths. She rubbed her nose disapprovingly and frowned, involuntarily, perhaps, pursing up her lips. Mr. Erwyn regarded her intently for a moment and wandered to the extreme end of the apartment, where he evinced a sudden interest in bric-à-brac.

"Is there any powder on my nose?" said Miss Allonby.

"I fail to perceive any," said Mr. Erwyn.

"Come closer," said she.

"I dare not," said he.

Miss Allonby wheeled about. "Fie!" she cried; "one that has served against the French, and afraid of powder!"

"It is not," said Mr. Erwyn, uncertainly, "the powder that I fear."

"What then?" said she, sinking on the divan beside the disordered tea-table.

"There are two of them," said Mr. Erwyn, "and they are so red——"

"Nonsense!" cried Miss Allonby, with heightened color.

"'Tis best to avoid temptation," said Mr. Erwyn, virtuously.

"Undoubtedly," said she, "'tis best to avoid having your ears boxed."

Mr. Erwyn sighed despondently. Miss Allonby moved to the end of the divan.

"What was it," said she, "that you had to tell me?"

"'Tis a matter of some importance," said Mr. Erwyn.

"Heavens!" said Miss Allonby, absent-mindedly drawing aside her skirts; "one would think you about to make a declaration."

Mr. Erwyn sat down beside her. "I have been known," said he, "to do such things."

The divan was strewn with cushions in the Oriental fashion. Miss Allonby, with some adroitness, slipped one between her person and that of her neighbor. "Oh!" said Miss Allonby.

"Yes," said he, peering over the barrier; "I admit that I am even now shuddering upon the verge of matrimony."

"Indeed?" said she, secure in her fortress. "Have you selected an accomplice?"

"Faith, yes!" said Mr. Erwyn.

"Have I the honor of her acquaintance?" said Miss Allonby.

"Indeed," said Mr. Erwyn, "no woman knows her better."

Miss Allonby smiled. "Dear Mr. Erwyn," said she, "this is a disclosure I have looked for this past six months."

"Oh!" said Mr. Erwyn.

"Heavens, yes!" said she. "You have been a most dilatory lover."

"I am truly sorry," said Mr. Erwyn, "to have kept you waiting."

"In fact," said she, "I had frequently thought of reproaching you for your tardiness."

"In that case," said Mr. Erwyn, "the matter could, no doubt, have been arranged more quickly."

"For your intentions have been most apparent."

Mr. Erwyn removed the cushion. "You do not, then, disapprove?" said he.

"Indeed, no," said Miss Allonby; "I think you will make an excellent step-father."

The cushion fell to the floor. Mr. Erwyn replaced it and smiled.

"And so," said Miss Allonby, "mother, thinking me in ignorance, has deputed you to inform me of this most transparent secret? How strange is the blindness of lovers! But, I dare say," sighed Miss Allonby, "we are much alike."

"We?" said Mr. Erwyn, softly.

"I meant——" said Miss Allonby, flushing somewhat.

"Yes?" said Mr. Erwyn. His voice sank to a pleading cadence. "Dear child, am I not worthy of trust?"

There was a pause.

"I am going to the Pantiles this afternoon," declared Miss Allonby, at length, "to feed the swans."

"Ah," said Mr. Erwyn, comprehendingly; "surely, he is somewhat tardy."

"Oh," said she, "then, you know?"

"I know," said he, "that there is a tasteful and secluded Summer-house near the Fountain of Neptune."

"I was never allowed," said Miss Allonby, unconvincingly, "to sit in secluded Summer-houses with——with any one; besides, the gardeners leave their lunch-baskets there."

Mr. Erwyn beamed upon her, paternally. "I was not previously aware," said he, "that Monsieur de Marigny was interested in ornithology. But suppose——"

"Oh, he will," said Miss Allonby, with confidence; then added, reflectively: "I shall be greatly and painfully surprised by his declaration."

"Doubtless," said Mr. Erwyn.

"I shall be deeply grieved that he has so utterly misunderstood my friendly interest in his welfare; I shall be highly indignant after he has—has——"

"Not until afterward?" said Mr. Erwyn, holding up a reproving forefinger.

"—after he has astounded me by his avowal. And I shall behave in the same manner the second time he recurs to the painful subject; but——"

"The third time?" said Mr. Erwyn.

"He has remarkably expressive eyes," said Miss Allonby, with a fine irrelevance.

"Ah, youth, youth!" sighed Mr. Erwyn. "Dear child, I pray you, do not trifle with the happiness that is within your grasp! *Si jeunesse savait*—the proverb is somewhat musty. But we that have attained the Saint Martin's Summer of our lives and have grown capable of but a calm and tempered affection at the utmost—we cannot but look wistfully on the wondrous happiness and ignorance of youth; and we would warn you, were it possible, of the many dangers whereby you are encompassed. For love is a deity that must not be trifled with; his voice may chant the requiem of all that is bravest in our mingled natures, or sound a stave of such nobility as heartens us through life. He is kindly, but implacable; and I that speak to you have seen my life made desolate by this flippant jesting with his terrors, and that ere the edge of my first razor had been dulled. 'Tis true, I have lived since in indifferent comfort; yet 'tis but a dreary banquet where there is no platter laid for love, and he has gone unfed in my heart these fifteen years or more."

"Dear Mr. Erwyn!" sighed Miss Allonby, moved by the earnestness of his speech. "And so," she queried, "you have loved mother all this time?"

"Faith——" said Mr. Erwyn.

"Pardon me," spoke the voice of Lady Allonby; "I trust you young people have adjusted matters to your satisfaction?"

III

"DEAR mother!" cried Miss Allonby, "I am delighted!" then kissed her vigorously and left the room, casting an arch glance at Mr. Erwyn as she went.

"Heavens!" said Lady Allonby, recovering her somewhat ruffled dignity, "the dear child is frightfully hoydenish! But, I suppose, we may regard the matter as settled?"

"Yes," said Mr. Erwyn; "I think, dear lady, we may safely regard the matter as settled."

"She is of an excitable nature," said she, seating herself on the divan; "and you, dear Mr. Erwyn, who know women so well, will doubtless pardon the agitation of a young girl placed in such an unaccustomed position. I myself was greatly affected by my first declaration."

"Doubtless," said Mr. Erwyn, sinking beside her, "Sir Stephen was very moving."

"I assure you," said she, smiling, "that he was not the first."

"Indeed," said he, "I remember very well——"

"You do not!" said Lady Allonby, flushing.

"You wore a blue gown," said he.

"Indeed?" said she.

"And——"

"If I did," said Lady Allonby, "I have quite forgotten it; and it is your duty to do likewise."

"I cannot," said Mr. Erwyn, sighing.

"There is nothing less well bred," said she, "than a good memory. I should decline to remain in the same room with one, were it not that Dorothy has deserted you in this strange fashion. Whither, pray, has she gone?"

Mr. Erwyn smiled in a knowing manner. "Her tender heart," said he, "is much affected by the pathetic and moving spectacle of the poor hungry swans, pining for their native land and made a raree-show for visitors in the Pantiles; and she has gone to stay them with biscuit and comfort them with cakes."

"Really?" said Lady Allonby.

"And," said Mr. Erwyn, "to defend her from the possible insolence of the unformed rustics and the—the ferocious goldfish, Monsieur de Marigny has obligingly offered his services as an escort."

"Oh!" said Lady Allonby; then added, disapprovingly: "Under the circumstances she might permissibly have broken the engagement."

"There is no engagement," said Mr. Erwyn—"as yet."

"Indeed?" said she.

"Faith," said he, "should he make a declaration this afternoon she will refuse him."

"Naturally," said she.

"And the second time," said he.

"Undoubtedly," said she.

"But the third time——"

"Well?"

Mr. Erwyn allowed himself a noiseless chuckle. "After the third time," said Mr. Erwyn, "there will be an engagement."

"Mr. Erwyn!" cried Lady Allonby, with widened eyes, "I understood that Dorothy had looked favorably upon your suit."

"Anastasia!" cried he; then passed his hand lightly over his brow.

"'Tis the first I had heard of it," said Mr. Erwyn.

"Surely—" said she.

"Surely," said he, "in consideration of the fact that, not an hour since, you deigned to bestow upon me your hand——"

"George!" cried Lady Allonby; and, recovering herself, smiled, courteously. "'Tis the first I had heard of it."

They stared at each other for a moment in utter bewilderment. Then Lady Allonby burst into almost hysterical laughter.

"You mean—?" said she.

"Indeed," said Mr. Erwyn, "so far was I from aspiring to Miss Allonby's hand that my whole soul was set upon possessing both the heart and person of a lady, in my humble opinion, far more desirable."

"I did not know—" said she.

"Behold," said Mr. Erwyn, bitterly, "how rightly is my presumption punished. For I, with a fop's audacity, had thought my love for you of sufficient moment to have been long since observed, and strong in my conceit had scorned a pleasing declaration made up of faint phrases and whining ballad-endings. I spoke as my heart prompted me, but the heart has proven a poor counselor, dear lady, and now am I rewarded. For you had not even known of my passion, and that which my presumption had taken as a reciprocal affection now proves but a kindly desire to further my marriage with another."

"You love me?" said Lady Allonby, softly.

"Indeed," said Mr. Erwyn, "I have loved you all my life—first with a boy's love that I scarce knew was love, and, after your marriage with an honorable man had severed us, as I thought, irrevocably, with such love as an honest man may bear a woman whom both circumstance and the respect in which he holds her have placed beyond his reach—a love that might not be spoken, but of which I had thought you could scarce be ignorant."

"Mr. Erwyn!" said she.

"Ah, madam, grant a losing gamester the right to rail at adverse fate! Since your widowhood I have pursued you with attentions which I now perceive must at many times have proved distasteful. But my love had blinded me; I shall trouble you no more. I did not know 'twas but a comedy of the eternal duel 'twixt man and woman, nor am I sorry that you have conquered, dear opponent. Ah, how valorously you fought! Even without the magic of that voice which stirs my blood so strangely or the witchery of those swift, doubtful glances, I had succumbed, I think, to the least of those sweet sentences which died in still sweeter laughter—the verbal thrust and stanch parrying of my veiled assault—were it but for admiration of their perfect, rounded art. You have conquered, dear lady, and I

yield a beaten and saddened heart to the victor."

"Dear George," said Lady Allonby, "you know that once——"

"Indeed," said Mr. Erwyn, "'twas the sand on which I builded. But I am wiser now and I perceive that the feeling you entertain toward me is but the pale shadow of a youthful inclination. I shall not presume upon it. I am somewhat proud, dear Anastasia; I have given you my heart, such as it is; were you minded to accept it even now, through friendship or pity, I should refuse. For my love of you has been the one pure and quite unselfish emotion of my life; I would not barter it for one less either in kind or degree. And so, farewell!"

"George," said Lady Allonby.

"I am at your service," said Mr.

Erwyn, pausing on his way to the door.

"This—this may——"

"'Tis a handkerchief," said Mr. Erwyn, "but somewhat moist."

"And—my eyes?"

"Red," said Mr. Erwyn.

"I—I have been weeping."

"Why?" said Mr. Erwyn.

"I—I thought you were to wed Dorothy."

Mr. Erwyn resumed his seat, precipitately. "You—objected?" said he.

"I think," said Lady Allonby, "I should entertain the same objection toward any woman——"

"Well?" said Mr. Erwyn.

"—except——"

"Incomparable Anastasia!" said Mr. Erwyn.



AT THE DAY'S END

ALL day among the anxious crowd I pressed,
All day I strove and bartered with the best,
All day my feet were busy in the mart—
Have I not earned my little hour of rest?

*Oh, my beloved, the shelter of your heart!
Oh, my beloved, the quiet of your breast!*

Ere the morn broke Toil called us to arise;
When the noon fell she drove us tyrant-wise;
Slow in the twilight died her loud alarms—
Fain would I turn me where the silence lies.

*Oh, my beloved, the comfort of your arms!
Oh, my beloved, the healing of your eyes!*

As footworn travelers a little space
Kneel in the shadow of some holy place,
Too wearied to lament or to rejoice,
So in your love receive me of your grace.

*Oh, my beloved, the soothing of your voice!
Oh, my beloved, the pity of your face!*

McGREA PICKERING.

THE STREET-DANCERS

By Victor Plarr

ORDER has obscured our vision,
 All the town has turned precisian,
 Void of melody, bereft
 Of desire to dance, naught left
 Save Salvation Army drums,
 Or the music of the slums
 Which the barrel-organ drones you,
 Hums you, tinkles you, intones you.
 Well, good lack! it might be worse.
 I, at least, am not averse
 To the ball-room on the flags,
 And the carnival of rags!
 Here's an organ for a band,
 And a dark-eyed player bland
 At the dancers nods and grins
 As the complex dance begins!
 'Tis no hackneyed waltz, God wot,
 But a kind of wild gavotte
 That has haply lingered down,
 Through all classes, for an æon,
 Since the beaux of London town
 Stepped it in the brave Pantheon.
 See the tattered dancers set—
 Ragged heads *en silhouette*,
 And a gold head here and there,
 Fair as some boy Christ's is fair!
 There's a nonchalant lithe grace
 In the way these children pace—
 Six steps forward, then a quick
 Twirl and a flamboyant kick!
 How the merry movement fires!
 How the dancing tune inspires!
 With ill-shod but rhythmic feet,
 They advance—they retreat,
 Shoulders back and heads erect!
 Oh, you envy that effect!
 'Tis as though in Drury Lane,
 Once the world of wit and poet,
 Something precious might remain,
 Though the people do not know it;
 Tatters of distinction vanished,
 Echoes of a laughter banished,
 Reliques of a Golden Age,
 To be these children's heritage!

SOME FOLK WHO WERE

By Alfred Henry Lewis

LET us return to the London of Holland, of Grafton, of Chat-ham, of Chesterfield, of Walpole, of March, of Gray, of Goldsmith, of Garrick, of Johnson, of Beauclerk, of Boswell, of Thrale—the London of statesmen and macaronis and poets and wits, the London of wigs and peri-wigs, the London of George the Third. It is as one should say: “Come we to the Athens of Alcibiades and Aristophanes or to the Rome of Cicero and Antony.”

It is cold and clear, with moon shining down and crisp frost under foot—weather as sparsely sown in February, 1768, about London town as it is to-day. Midnight is noon at Brooks’s. The club’s drawing-rooms bristle with wax lights, whereof the beams through the unshuttered windows escape to the outer world and merge with the congenial radiance of the moon. A sedan chair pauses at the club’s portals; a small old man, bowed with years, infirm on tottering legs, wrapped in furs against the biting air, is helped out by one of the thick-legged chairmen. As the latter would assist the old man, he is put aside by a gentleman who himself is bound for Brooks’s.

“You walk but ill, my lord,” observes the younger man, himself past middle age, but lithe and firm, as he helps his older companion up the steps.

“One after seventy does all things ill,” returns the other. “But I will walk. You know the proverb, ‘Use legs, have legs.’”

In the glare of the drawing-room the identity of the duo is revealed. Short, thin, worn, decrepit, arched of nose, face of singular ugliness yet full

of worldly grace, courtly, refined, enlightened, bush-browed, hard, insinuating, arrogant, a dark, gray-black old figure—who else should it be but Lord Chesterfield? The other, with a high, clear, easy cynicism, as perceivable as an atmosphere, is that lamp of letters, Horace Walpole.

Over those numerous tables of oak that stud the drawing-rooms of Brooks’s bend buzzing circles of bucks and macaronis. These gentry are twitteringly busy about hazard, quinze and pharo. At one table is a decorous whist party. At every table guineas in hundreds and thousands are being lost and won. Some, with sword at side, are brilliant in silks and satins, velvets and Flemish laces. Others have covered their plumage with long dark coats and leathern cuffs. The latter are sons of economy and would save the richness of their costumes. All wear flower-crowned hats, wide of brims, to ward away the candles’ glare.

“What think you of our rising youth, my lord?” asks Walpole, waving a high-bred hand at the gamesters. “Corruption the purpose of government, and drinking and gambling the purpose of society, we live again the age of Pompey and Lucullus. Those youngsters, some of them not out of their teens, play for five, ten, fifteen thousand guineas of a night—win and lose fortunes between bed and bed. Even I, who dislike gaming and cards as little as I can, am dragged along and have already fed the avarice of certain lady friends with four hundred odd pounds this very evening. I’ve been from Strawberry Hill two weeks and I assure

you, my lord, in all that time the only news I've heard is, 'What is trumps?'"

"It is a day of wagers, truly," consents Chesterfield; "an age which fells oaks to fatten Jews. But I must not criticize. As says Seneca, 'Every man has his weakness,' and dice has not been the least of mine."

"Eleven thousand pounds! And on one hand! My lord, you are in fortune!" These exclamations come from the group about a hazard table.

"Gads, yes!" And the lucky popinjay, tall, slim and of an aristocratic vacuity of face—twenty-two he is—yawns affectedly and takes delicate snuff, to impress his gilded fellows with his coolness. "Gads, yes! it was high time. Eleven thousand pounds! Gads, now, if I'd only been playing deep, I'd have had a million!"

At a table, cleared of its paraphernalia of regular gaming, is crowded a select bevy of bucks. Their mood is fantastic. A perfect circle, drawn of chalk and two feet in diameter, has been marked on the smooth oaken surface. Two of the party are to have a race between cockroaches. Starting from the centre and left to their own devices, that insect will prove to be winner who first crosses the confining chalk. There are a thousand guineas wagered on each.

"But how are we to tell our bugs apart?" lisps one exquisite, doubtfully. "These little animals seem amazingly alike. Odds daddles! they're very brothers!"

An inventive, fertile buck suggests a spot of paint for one as a distinguishing mark. It is a bright thought. A tin of white paint is had up from the store-rooms and the back of one poor cockroach is touched carefully and lightly, the tip of a pen-feather serving as brush.

Chesterfield and Walpole pay no heed to the gamblers. They approach a party of gentlemen taking wine. Among them one counts the dark Stuart features of Topham Beauclerk; under thirty years, he is youngest of the circle. There, too, are the well-nurtured, well-clad George Selwyn,

Gillie Williams and Earl of March. At March's side sits one, bold of eye, broad of brow—a wise yet dissolute face this, and strong with a vicious force; the more remarkable, perhaps, because the owner is but thirty-three. It is Fitzroy, the infamous Duke of Grafton.

Where so much is gathered of fashion and power one should find a sycophant. Ah, there he is, at the Grafton elbow and a trifle in the background. His years are fifty-one; his countenance—with round forehead, light eyes, high nose, short lip and long jaw, this latter slightly protruding, face all smug and smooth, a placeman's face—would be good and pleasant enough were it not for the mouth. This is defective—the true courtier's mouth, abject, plausible, deprecatory, eager with adulation, ready for the utterance of any lying, cringing flattery. And who may the flatterer be? One Gray, a poet; he of the "Elegy." There is to come a vacant professorship at Cambridge, with nothing to do beyond drawing four hundred yearly pounds. Gray licks subservient lips and posts hungrily to town to beg the post from the potent Grafton.

Gray, a few months later, has his time-serving rewarded and the sinecure coveted falls to his share. Later still, when the ignoble Grafton shocks decent taste by himself seizing the chancellorship of the University, Gray, already warm in his comfortable nest, is prompt with an affable welcoming "ode." In this he exhausts the fulsome and invokes the shades of Milton, Newton and the royal ghosts of all the sovereigns: "Great Edward, with the lilies on his brow," with "sad Chatillon and princely Clare," and "either Henry," to muster in the college halls for honor of Grafton—that "nobleman" whose evilisms provoke a Junius and make sick an age.

Walpole, as he and Chesterfield draw near, greets Gray with warmth. The scholar of Strawberry Hill does not distaste a sycophant. Moreover, he and Gray were boys of a bench at Eton and in their youth made the grand tour together.

"How about your new published poems by Dodsley?" cries Walpole. "I hold myself neglected; you did not show them to me in advance."

There comes a storm of exclamation from the coterie about the racing insects. This drowns the poet's reply. There is a deal of sharp, angry protest. Williams goes over, being curious. Then occurs that lull in the uproar which shows the pass desperate.

"You wear a sword, sir!" haughtily remarks the macaroni of the painted cockroach, tapping his gilded hilt.

"And the Park is convenient!" stiffly retorts he of the rival cockroach.

Then the eight or nine macaronis go away in a fierce bustle, which seems to move no one to concern save themselves.

"The painted insect died of the white lead," explains Williams, as he returns laughing. "His backer cried 'Foul' and fell to a bicker over the stakes."

"He should lose, however," observes March. "It's as though a horse fell dead in a race."

"Let them duel," says Walpole. "There is moon enough to see their tucks. And the night is cold—a little blood-letting will not hurt them."

"Still," remonstrates the polished Chesterfield, "they brawled most ungentlemanly—prodigiously like chairmen. The age fails of gentility. Do you not think so, my lord?"

"Truly, sir, I do," replies March, to whom Chesterfield turns. "I think either might fairly have avoided an encounter on the grounds advanced by Colonel Lutrell when his father, the notorious Simon, defied him. 'I will use you on my rapier's blade as a cook uses a lark,' cried Lutrell, *père*. But he didn't; his engaging son refused his challenge on the ground that the old one was not a gentleman."

"How admirably Irish on both their parts!" remarks Walpole. Then to Beauclerk: "And why so much to yourself, Beau? Has your wit no wings these days?"

Beauclerk starts, and retorts ami-

ably, but with little point. Beauclerk is preoccupied. Within a few brief weeks he will wed the frail Lady Bolingbroke, from whom his friend "Bully" is in process of being divorced. She will have her old name—but not her old charm—as the Lady Di Spencer, and as such Beauclerk will put the ring on her finger. Then the two will give dinners at Beauclerk's house while the town rolls the scandal underneath its tongue. It is a contemplation of his future that sinks the volatile Beauclerk in abstraction. Selwyn comes to the rescue.

"Sir, how fared you at Bath?" he asks of Chesterfield.

"Never more vilely. I at one time thought the snow would hold me captive there forever. But I broke through; I escaped. While prisoner in my apartments I had cause to thank heaven my boyhood had been well educated of books. Sir—" and Chesterfield turns to March—"sir, plant the tree of knowledge in youth; it will shade your old age."

"Indeed, my lord," returns March, smiling, "your excellent counsel comes over-late for one at forty-three."

"What hear you of the elections, sir?" asks Grafton of Chesterfield.

"Nothing, your grace, save 'Wilkes and Liberty,'" replies Chesterfield.

There is a gleam in the ancient eye of the courtier of Blackheath as he says this. One gains from the manner of both that Chesterfield and Grafton carry small regard for each other.

"Wilkes is but so much sounding brass," comments March, contemptuously.

"Sir, the common ear," remarks Chesterfield, with a tinge of satirical triumph and as one who would be consolable should "Wilkes and Liberty" succeed, "the common ear does not distinguish between the sound of brass and the sound of metal more precious. Also, with the eye of the vulgar, polished brass will oft go further than rough gold."

"If I were in politics, I fear I might

sympathize with Wilkes," says Walpole.

"Sir," says Chesterfield, with a bow to Walpole, "I would subscribe to any politics you might lay down."

"My lord, you honor me," retorts Walpole. "My lord, I have laid down politics."

There is a general smile at the quip and Chesterfield takes snuff from Walpole's mull.

"The du Deffand sent it to me," says Walpole, as Williams receives the snuff-mull and admires the pearl-incrusted lid. "However, to go back to Wilkes. With all tenderness for March and Grafton, I regard the man as the victim of tyranny. What does he do? He becomes obnoxious to a Tory government. The famous 'Number 45' of the *North Briton*, wherein Wilkes, discussing King George's speech to Parliament, asserts His Majesty to be guilty of 'a monstrous fallacy,' is seized on. Wilkes is arrested for libel. His belongings are ransacked by methods which we will leave our absent friend Sandwich to defend, and a private paper, one never published, his 'Essay on Woman' is found and becomes the gravenamen of further charges. There is a distortion of law, a twisting of fact; Wilkes is convicted. *Pendente lite*, every bravo of the court, every bully of the House of Commons, must needs—for a royal smile—hawk at Wilkes with challenges to duel. He goes to Hyde Park with these swash-bucklers; he is desperately wounded. Then he falls subject to the pestering plots of court physicians. They hector him with hourly visits to see if he be strong enough to be lugged off to the Tower. These doctors meant nothing but his death; they would have achieved it had not Wilkes fled to France."

"And why did not the rogue remain in France?" demands March, hotly.

"Sir, as to that," responds Chesterfield, taking the place of Walpole, "he gave government notice a month ago that he would return. He is

ready to answer his outlawry. He has been in London a fortnight, and neither Mansfield nor any other would seem to have the courage to command his apprehension."

"If my counsel were heeded," remarks Grafton, "there would be nothing done with Wilkes. Correctly measured, he is small; and the only peril government runs is the peril of making him a martyr in the eyes of the mob. The man himself amounts to little. He is capable of nothing great; he speaks badly; at the best, he is that least of little things, a writer."

Grafton says this to Chesterfield and he studies, withal, a careful politeness. Still, it is evident that he burns with resentment.

"Sir, I hold a writer higher," responds Chesterfield. "Next to doing something that ought to be written, the best great thing is writing something that ought to be read. Sir, your grace may yet learn respect for folk of the quill."

Four years later, when Grafton writhes under the lashings of a knout-master, he recalls the warning of Chesterfield.

"What government most lacks," observes Walpole, "is firmness and decision. There is no fixed course, no solidity of purpose, nothing save vacillation. It has been thus for years. As it was with George the Second, so it is with George the Third. There's nothing new under the sun."

"You mean under the grandson," corrects Selwyn.

The sally is opportune. Discussion otherwise had fallen upon the acrimonious, with March and Grafton in opposition to Walpole and Chesterfield. "Wilkes and Liberty" is not a subject to be temperately considered, even by folk so trained in gentleness as Chesterfield, or with such reason for cool caution as belongs with Grafton.

"You will be returned to the House, George?" asks Walpole of Selwyn.

"If I'm not, I'll never look Matson or Robin Hood's Hill in the face again," rejoins the latter.

"Lord Holland," remarks Williams, "will have Charlie Fox brought in from Medhurst. Charlie is but nineteen and, while he may hold a seat, he cannot vote. I said so to Lord Holland. 'What signified the vote?' retorts my lord. 'Vote? No; but he'll be allowed to talk, which is the thing important. I do not send him to Parliament for the country, but for himself. It will 'blood the pup;'" Charlie will later be vastly the better dog for it."

"Beau, your beer-mongering friend, Thrale, will come in from Southwark," observes Walpole, turning to Beauclerk. The latter is still silently ruminating a future full of doubt because full of the doubtful Lady Di. "I encountered the great Samuel Johnson at Davies's the other day; he assured me of the certainty of Thrale and asked me to Streatham. Then he praised Goldsmith's play of 'The Good-natured Man,' just on at Covent Garden; spoke scornfully of the jackanapes Garrick for not acting it at Drury Lane; went forward to downright violence against both Garrick and the Irishman Kelly for 'False Delicacy,' which the latter wrote and Garrick put on against 'The Good-natured Man;' and at last vanished in a whirlwind of roarings. Decidedly, the Great Cham gave me a taste of what Goldsmith calls 'his bow-wow manner.'"

"There'll be one good Tory in Parliament," says March, "and one who will not yield to 'Wilkes and Liberty' when Thrale takes his seat."

"If his politics be as sound as his beer," rejoins Selwyn, "I shall have pleasure in uplifting Thrale. However, I'm sick, heart and soul, of this election. It will prevent my presence at one of the most interesting executions—a perfect death-drama, it will be—ever put on at Tyburn. Gillie," this to Williams, "remember, you are to be at our window over the butcher's and see and write me every detail."

"By the way," says Williams, "speaking of death, I was in Tom's

Coffee House to-day and met Laurence Sterne; he of *Shandy*. Poor Sterne! He is on his last journey. I could read it in his eyes."

"Sir, there is no telling," remonstrates Chesterfield. "A month ago, had you encountered me at Bath, you would have laid two for one that I would now be under the sod. Yet I am better than on any day within five years; even my deafness has disappeared by half. Sterne will be well again. Bless his slim meagerness! we cannot afford to lose the lean Shandian."

Grafton is silently brooding over "Wilkes and Liberty" and Number 45 of the *North Briton*. Outwardly cold, his wrath is ready to flame. Less and less he likes that exultation wherewith the old Chesterfield humors the notion of Wilkes.

"Then, sir, you deem well of Wilkes's chances?" finally remarks Grafton to Chesterfield.

"Why, sir, I deem well of free-born Englishmen. Wherefore, I deem well of Wilkes's prospects. I like the cause though not the man."

"Your appreciation of Wilkes, doubtless, has been somewhat sharpened by Chatham's failure and my refusal to find a Parliament seat for your son;" and Grafton's eyes second the sneer that dwells in his tones.

"Sir," observes Walpole to Grafton, and his interposition comes sharply, "sir, do you think that just?"

"Pardon me," says Chesterfield, stiffly, putting Walpole aside. "Let us waive a question which his grace of Grafton might not understand. Let us bring the matter more within his habit. I hear from Hume, who knows Wilkes's plans in full, that Wilkes will stand first for the City; and failing, will immediately offer himself for Middlesex. As a method sure to convince your grace that my belief in Wilkes grows not at all from those family causes you so courteously suggest, I'll proffer you a wager. I am old and had thought myself done with wagers. However, I will, should your grace choose, lay you ten thousand guineas

that Wilkes, either for London or the county, carries a seat."

Gray, the poet, makes a convulsive gesture, as if the mention of such sums were a shock. Since Walpole's greeting, the author of the "Elegy" and aspirant for a professorship has not spoken. He bestows himself, however, to a timid and attentive canvass of what is said. It is nature; your bred sycophant, in a clash of opinion among positive folk, will sit closely neutral while he may.

"Done, my lord," retorts Grafton, in response to Chesterfield. "I bet you, then, ten thousand guineas that Wilkes will not win a certificate from either the town or the county. Will you have it written in the club's betting book, my lord?"

"Sir, that is as you choose," says Chesterfield. His eye is bright, his bearing perfect.

"It is scarce needed," says March, full of animation. "Grafton, I will, if you permit, take half of my lord of Chesterfield's wager."

"And I," observes Walpole to Chesterfield, "will be vastly flattered if I may have half with you against our friends of March and Grafton."

Grafton's face is now as clear as a sky in June. He extends his hand to Chesterfield.

"We are friends, I trust," says Grafton.

"Of a verity, are we!" declares Chesterfield, with warmth. "Sir, I should be deeply loser else. And we will meet at Walpole's house in Arlington street on election night to hear the fate of this speculation."

"Agreed!"

"That is like to prove an anxious night for my wine-bins," says Walpole, with a pretense to be rueful.

"I marvel, Horry," observes Williams, "since you seem so blithe to wager on such matters, that you do not take the active personal part in government."

"Truly, I have not those natural traits of true statesmanship," returns Walpole, with a quizzical look at Grafton; "that is to say, latter-day

statesmanship. Government needs none like me. Now, if I resembled Rigby," he continues, thoughtfully; "but I won't say Rigby. If I did not pay my debts and went to bed drunk at six each morning, I might expect to be called at noon to save the nation."

There is great noise of feet and hubbub of voices. These are signs to mark the return of our bellicose macaronis. There has been no duel—no blood; honor has been saved without. A thoughtful macaroni, he who suggested the paint, has considered within himself that it may be possible to try over the contest with two new insects, there being great store of such small deer to be had for the hunting in the nether regions of the club's premises. His thought has won ready adoption by the two principals. A servant of Brooks's is commissioned to secure the new rival beetles. This he does, snipping a bit from the wing of one for purposes of identification. A moment later the macaronis are again on severest strain about their oaken race-course and the two-thousand-guinea match is on anew.

"Egad, sir!" chuckles Chesterfield, as he accepts Walpole's arm to his chair, "this tilt with Grafton has made me younger by over a score of years and sent me back to fifty. More, Horry; either I don't know England, or we shall win."

II

STREATHAM HOUSE, a decent bit of architecture with broad foundations, is white and green, and of three several stories. It commands imposingly the visiting eye, with its surrounding one hundred acres of grove and farm. There are barns with twenty champing hunters stabled, kennels for two packs of yapping, yelping hounds. To the rear is an immense inclosure, whereof the walls are high and of brick. Within these are forcing houses, all glass and of temperature tropical; wherein, the year round, a skilful gardening re-

sults in every manner of flower, vegetable and fruit.

The noon's sun is bright overhead. There are guests to come calling at Streatham -- the house of Brewer Thrale. Old friends they are for the most; among them one finds Goldsmith's ugly, beaming face; Reynolds, with his heavy eyes, coarse nose and drooping mouth, with dreary down-curves at the corners; the polished Walpole; Arthur Murphy, the playwright; and last comes Elizabeth Montagu, the blue-stocking of Mayfair.

Brewer Thrale, tall, stately, gravely urbane, is with his guests in the sun-filled morning-room. There is a quiet fineness about brewer Thrale; strong of mind, strong of frame, taciturn, self-willed, Oxford man, one-time rake, now sedate with his cash and his beer casks, he is typically worth while as a gentleman of trade. Also, he is benevolent in broad, though sluggish, fashion; he is political and would go to Parliament from Southwark as an adherent of Grafton. A brisk, small, round, pretty woman, Mrs. Thrale, comes trippingly into the room and greets her visitors, giving each of them both hands. While the callers chat with host and hostess, the heavy foot -- to match his heavy features -- of Doctor Johnson is heard on the stair.

Streatham is the present home of Johnson and has been these several many months. The philosopher descends to the hall, where Thrale's valet, quietly at the stair's foot, stops him, removes his frayed wig, candle-scorched in front, and replaces it with another, combed and handsome. The sage looks vaguely ahead, realizing nothing of the improvement.

Johnson is, for him, well dressed in a brown suit with bright metal buttons, and his shoes have silver buckles -- an unthinkable foppery! Evidently, the Thralean influence has helped him in these kempt and cleanly particulars.

Following the wig's adjustment, Johnson looks carefully over the distance between him and the door of

the morning-room, as though counting it in paces. He must reach the door with just so many steps and must enter the morning-room with left foot forward; such is his eccentricity. Solemnly he makes a start, muttering as he proceeds the count of steps. He hits it off rightly; the left foot is first at the door. He breathes in a relieved way; he will not have to re-trace and make the journey again.

Once in the morning-room, Johnson accosts the visitors in a mood of sour abstraction. As they chat, he rocks in his chair, rubbing his left knee softly with his hand, as one who nurses an injury. Now and again his face twitches and he twists and tosses his arms convulsively. He starts up, strides to a window and with his back to the company mutters the Lord's Prayer, to be muttering followed by a verse or two from Horace. Then he clucks like a hen; next he supplants these poultry noises with "Tut, tut, tut!" Then, suddenly turning and regardlessly bursting in on Mrs. Montagu, who is in the midst of her "Dialogues of the Dead," he cries, in loud, harsh, peremptory voice:

"Fie, madam! Don't talk of death or of the dead! I hate death as I hate tombstones! Tombstones! They are nothing -- they mean nothing -- they convey no ideas save ones of horror -- they should be beaten to pieces to pave our streets!" This last with an air of profound absence, whereat the others smile. Then, turning to Thrale: "Pray, sir, is it not sometimes a strange reflection to you while about your brewery that the building stands over the very site of Shakespeare's old theatre on the Bankside?"

"Sir, in my brewery," replies Thrale, with a sharpness meant to arouse the philosopher to his surroundings, "I do not think on Shakespeare; I think on beer."

Doctor Johnson seems startled into the present by something in the manner of that one man whom he fears. He flushes like guilt. Then he turns

to pretty, plump Mrs. Thrale, who has taken a chair by his side.

"And how like you the volume of 'Evelina'?" she asks.

"The new little rogue of a book quite catches me," says Johnson. "There are passages that would do credit to Richardson. But why, madam, do you wear that dull frock?" This with severity. "You are small; you should wear gay colors—all insects are gay."

"Why, yes, sir," Goldsmith is saying, with his quick, stumbling manner of conversation, in response to a query of Thrale's; "why, yes, sir; I believe Reynolds here is kind enough to design a reconciliation between Garrick and myself. For one, I shall be very glad."

"And Davy will be equally glad," speaks up Reynolds, who has got his ear-trump to bear. "We shall get you together at the first fair occasion of some dinner. You and Garrick should be friends, sir. I know of no two who have more in common."

"'Tis a futile fellow, Davy!" remarks Johnson, shaking his head.

"Sir, I thought you liked Garrick," says Walpole, bantering.

"Nay, sir, I like him well enough," retorts Johnson; "but he wearies me with his airs and his art. He has sprightly conversation, he tells a good story; but he plans his exits and his entrances as though society were a stage—he must appear to music and leave in a shower of sparks."

"Sir, Garrick's is a nature replete of low meanness," breaks in Murphy, warmly. "See what he does the other night to Goldsmith's 'Good-natured Man.' He puts on 'False Delicacy' by that Brummagem Churchill, the Dublin stay-maker, Kelly; he plays Drury Lane against Covent Garden and pays the papers to puff Kelly and slight Goldsmith. Is not that meanness?"

"Why, sir," retorts Johnson, with a grin, "had Davy, avoiding 'False Delicacy,' put on your 'Zenobia' at Drury Lane, instead of keeping the poor jade locked hard and fast in

pawn for the one hundred guineas he gave you, we might look to hear less about the matter. Nay, sir," continues Johnson, going over to Murphy and putting forth a kindly hand to that incensed dramatist, "I did but jest. You must forgive me. Sir, I owe you much for introducing me to these excellent Thrales three years ago, and unless we continue friends I cannot repay you."

Murphy smiles and in sign of friendship grasps the doctor's somewhat dingy hand. After this the learned doctor again becomes absent and rocks himself backward and forward in his chair, glaring with eyes that notice nothing, meanwhile blowing like a whale. The talk of the others leaves him to himself.

"Sir, I was myself robbed within two miles of my house," Thrale is saying to Walpole, apropos of some mention by the latter of a recent hanging at Tyburn. "The highwayman stopped me on Kennington Common and at the pistol's mouth took watch and purse. I had the pleasure of seeing him hanged on the very spot."

Mrs. Thrale is saying something in a low aside to Doctor Johnson. Perhaps it has concern with his impolite abstractions; which latter the blue-stocking Montagu, not in the least used to this lack of notice, is inclined to take in dudgeon. The doctor's face congests with wrath as he listens.

"Well bred, madam!" he roars. "I ask you to observe that I am well bred to the point of needless scrupulosity!" Then, as his eye counts a smile about the mouth of Murphy, with whom he was so lately tender, "How now, sir? What provokes your risibility? I trust I've said nothing that you understand. If I have, I beg pardon of the company for being vilely dull."

Murphy continues to smile, but makes no retort. His silence appeases Johnson. A second epileptic jerking of his arms seizing him, he returns hastily to his window. He whistles softly and then is heard

repeating over and over: "*'Prudentia fato major!'*" So said the calculating Florentine. But it was not true, and de' Medici himself lived long enough to see how stronger is destiny than any most prudent plan of man."

The sprightly Mrs. Thrale carries away Mrs. Montagu and Goldsmith to the fruits and blossoms of her hot-houses. Johnson still clucks and whistles and mutters at the window, while Thrale, Walpole, Murphy and Reynolds discuss the stage. Johnson, catching some interesting fragment of greenroom gossip, comes back to earth.

"Sir, the Athenians," says Johnson to Walpole, as he resumes his arm-chair, "were more quick for the drama than the English. Aye, sir, were they! They may sometimes have admired wrong, but at least they trembled right, which last speaks for their sensibility. Sir, the Athenians appreciated art. They censured Æschylus for frightening them with his *Furies*; and fined Phrynichus a thousand drachmas for torturing their souls with the pathos of his *'Miletus.'*"

"How it would flatter Garrick," says Walpole, "were he found guilty and punished for a crime like that!"

"Aye, would it not, indeed?" shouts Johnson. "D'y'e mind, Murphy, the night when we were talking in the greenroom; how Davy came in and said he could hear us on the stage and that it distracted his feeling as *Hamlet*? 'Fie, sir,' says I. '*Punch* has no feeling.' Ah, I twisted the vain rogue till he winced!" Here the excellent doctor laughs uproariously.

"As you say, sir," exults Murphy, in full coincidence with Johnson, "Garrick is mad with conceit and vanity. He has all the Kellys and Kenricks and Purdons and Smarts of Grub street in his pay to praise him."

Reynolds, who loves Garrick and who, for all his deafness, catches enough to know that Garrick is being flayed, seeks another topic.

"Where now is your friend Boswell?" asks Reynolds of Johnson.

"In Scotland," returns Johnson; "the rascal is in fear of me and afraid to return. He had the perfidy to use a private letter of mine to advantage his '*Account of Corsica,*' and now skulks among his Scottish hills in apprehension of my resentment. However, I go to visit my friend Chambers at Oxford to-morrow and shall write to Bozzy my forgiveness from there. That will bring him to town like dog to whistle."

"You go to Parliament from Southwark?" says Walpole to Thrale. "I heard as much last evening at Brooks's."

"He must go," says Johnson, hot with an instant zeal. "The day is too much infested of vermin such as Wilkes with his cry of '*Liberty.*' Folk like Thrale must meet and crush them. Sir," to Walpole, "times change and the world turns upside down. In your father's time—in Sir Robert Walpole, the King gave a minister to the people; in Pitt, the people gave a minister to the King. And yet," continues Johnson, more mildly, "government, I fear, makes too much of Wilkes. If I were the King, I should send six of my footmen to duck the scoundrel, as four years ago the Duc de Rohan sent six of his to cudgel that Ferney rascal, Voltaire."

"You remind me, by your heat," retorts Walpole, drily, "that Voltaire said, '*The English all go mad once in seven years.*'"

"And also, doctor," cuts in Thrale, who relishes baiting the Great Bear of letters, "Voltaire, in further translating us, declares that he loathes England for that her people have sixty religions and only one gravy; that we have no fruit save potatoes, and nothing polished but steel."

"Sir," returns Johnson, "Voltaire is an infidel. He denies the goodness of God; it is not strange then that he denies merit to England."

"Why, sir," says Walpole, who also inclines to Johnson's annoyance, "do you not know that Voltaire has builded a Swiss church and written

over its door, '*Deo erexit Voltaire*'? that he has carved himself a tomb in the near-by rock and proposes there, on next Easter, to receive the communion wine and bread? Does that look like refusing God?"

"It is but mockery," returns Johnson. "The jeering creature has no more of religion than the traitor Wilkes has of patriotism."

"And why call you Wilkes a traitor?" demands Walpole, whom it pleases to follow the irate Johnson from name to name and point to point. The colloquy delights Thrale, whose one best pleasure is to sit the silent witness of some verbal row.

"Why call Wilkes a traitor?" repeats Johnson, while his voice mounts with his choler. "Sir, is he true to his King?"

"And if he be not, what then?" responds Walpole. The tones of the aristocrat of Strawberry Hill also begin to gather earnestness. "Why should the subject be true? What king is true? Does not every monarch set the example of duplicity? What king is true? Is it that king of barley-water, King George the Third? His loyalty is manifest in his treatment of our English Steenkirk, Harry Conway, the hero of Culloden and Fontenoy! His truth is shown when Barre, with a French bullet in his face, is reft of those honors he won against Montcalm at Quebec, because he dared speak for English liberty at home! Must folk be true where kings are false? Let loyalty begin at St. James!"

Johnson, wrathful, shocked, is fairly dumb. He is tongue-tied; the more, since for all Johnson's dislike of Walpole, he secretly reverences him as of the pure blood. Johnson, the born vulgarian of Litchfield, has the weakness common to the vulgar, a worship of patricianism. Walpole's words shock him even more than they stir his ire. He sits staring, making no answer. Reynolds, on his half-hearing part, smiles and treats himself to snuff. Thrale, who finds something exceeding funny in the bout,

comes so far out of his common self as to laugh loudly and long.

"It is the story of every clime and every age," gasps Thrale, at last. "The noble stands for the people, while the peasant defends the king."

"Let us seek the ladies and Goldsmith," observes Reynolds, by way of proposing truce; "Murphy has already gone."

They find Mrs. Thrale, the blue-stocking Montagu, Goldsmith and Murphy in the hothouses. Along the wall and beneath the glass-filtered rays, great peaches already redden and ripen. These at once fill the thoughts of Johnson to the exclusion of King and Commons, Wilkes, Walpole and Voltaire. He gathers them with greedy hands; he devours unctuously, while juices spurt and drip on face and coat.

"Never but once," observes Johnson, grunting rather than speaking, with full, difficult mouth, "never save once did I get my fill of wall fruit."

III

Tom's Coffee House, Cornhill, holds few customers this raw March day. Three gentlemen are gathered about a table. The one who is perhaps fifty-seven, of a countenance most decisively Scotch, is David Hume, the philosopher; the elder of his two companions—sixteen years younger than Hume, a man of ugly features, with a hideous squint—is Wilkes, agitator, idol of the mob, foe of the King, incidentally martyr to the cause of freedom and racking England with his fight to enter Parliament; the younger—twenty-eight years should be his—is James Boswell, an upstartish, small, foppish man, dapper of leg though not of waist, with upturned nose and airs of ineffable vanity, he who so follows at the heels of growling Johnson. The trio are there for a brief bottle of wine.

"Ye have a strange destiny, John," says Hume to Wilkes. "You of all folk, to stand for morality and law—

you the most dissolute and lawless! Why, man, it's like a joke!"

"It's like to prove no jest to the Tories," replies Wilkes, with a grim smile. "For myself, hacked at, shot at, an outlaw, a fugitive, late of the King's prison, I confess, on my soul's side, to have found scant humor in the game. And I trust to furnish my enemies as little. I shall succeed; I shall yet triumph over my foes from my seat in the House."

"You are right, sir," says Hume, earnestly. "You are to win, not by your own goodness but by the goodness of what you represent. I would Churchill had lived to lend your war his fire. A hundred lines from his quick pen at this pinch would set London in a blaze."

"Poor Churchill!" remarks Wilkes, while a look of sadness somewhat redeems his ugly face, "he has paid the debt and been gathered to the wits of other days."

"Sir, they tell me," pipes Boswell to Wilkes, "that Change Alley is fair agog over your canvass. They sell your chances as a stock."

"They are a stock that is to be at premium when all is done," retorts Wilkes. Then, fiercely: "If I may only live to have Grafton, Sandwich, Dashwood and March at the bar of the House, there to answer for their villainies, I'll pass content and feel my wrongs well paid."

"And yet, John," says Hume, "you were a wild Medmenham rake with all of these. Despite your ugliness, you were the terror of half the lovers and husbands of London."

"And that is very true," observes Wilkes, complacently and as one who gives way to flattering retrospection. "Nor may I more than you, Davie, account for woman's taste. I may say, however, that I—fairly the ugliest and handicapped with a disgraceful squint besides—was never half an hour behind the handsomest man of England."

"Sir," says Boswell, in tones conceited and trussing out his small chest like a pigeon, "sir, I perceive

that you and I hold with the Mohammedan that woman is Allah's best gift to man!"

"Aye, I grant you!—if you never marry her!" says Wilkes. He clouds as he reflects perhaps on his own graceless treatment of his wife.

"Still, I shall marry," says Boswell, with a satisfied, judgmatical mien. "I think it the wiser thing for me. I find that, single, I am like Sterne and must ever have some Dulcinea in my mind. Sir, it is perilous to bide a bachelor!" Here little Boswell glares in a sort of terror with round eyes. "Indeed, as late as last Summer I came within a word of leading a gardener's daughter to the altar. Zooks! it makes me quiver!"

Hume and Wilkes laugh at the fright that brings beads to the forehead of the coxcomb Boswell, while he considers how closely he rubbed against destruction. Then Hume turns again to Wilkes.

"Burke is your friend?"

Wilkes's coarse lip twitches into a half-sneer. "Sir, Burke sees in me those two elements of a best party question: I am popular and I am practical."

"Burke is a power," says Boswell. "I never saw him, but I've oft heard my great friend, Doctor Johnson, speak of him." This last with a mighty important smirk. "Doctor Johnson describes him as a great orator."

"And so of truth he is," observes Wilkes, but with the manner of the man irritated. It is clear Wilkes is not overfond of Burke in his heart. "Burke is another Cicero. Sometimes, though, Burke's oratory would make one suspect that he ate potatoes and drank whiskey."

"And they're no bad foundations for a deathless eloquence, either!" comments Hume.

"Doctor Johnson," says Boswell, bending across table to the others and with deepest mystery, "tells me that whenever Burke is to make a set speech in the House and would insure himself of burning rhetoric and liveliest fancy, he is smartly blistered

between the shoulders the night before. Dryden had the same thought. He would call in a barber and give himself to a copious letting of blood when about to commence a tragedy or a poem or any great literary work."

Boswell now goes forward with a general conversation while the others listen tolerantly. He tells how he is just from Scotland; how Johnson is gone to Oxford; how he will follow on the morrow. Then he rambles off to Corsica and the Paoli revolutionists. As Boswell—never so happy as when he himself is listened to—runs forward trippingly of late wanderings in Europe; of Voltaire, of Rousseau, of those others whose lairs he invaded and whose privacy his conceited impertinence disturbed, Horace Walpole and the poet Gray arrive. They bow distantly to Hume and Wilkes and go to a table across the room. Boswell they neglect in their recognitions. The little toady colors at Walpole's failure to salute him. Gray he does not know; but the critic of Strawberry Hill was heretofore marked down in France by our lion-hunter.

"I would prefer to miss an encounter with both Wilkes and Hume," whispers Walpole to Gray. "They are well enough; but an intimacy that goes beyond a nod is not desirable with either. That sounds ill of me, too, when I've wagered my guineas on Wilkes. Still, what should that account? As the violent Doctor Johnson would say under like circumstances, 'Sir, I have wagered my guineas on a horse, but I did not sit at table with the horse!'"

Walpole roars forth this last with such flagrant imitation of the Great Cham that Boswell, who has again taken up the thread of adventures full of new loves, new lions and new wine, starts in alarm.

"Who is yon little pompous, shallow person?" asks Gray of Walpole, indicating Boswell with a look.

"You draw him, line for line," retorts Walpole. "He is a person, pompous and shallow, as you say. It is he who the other day brought out

an 'Account of Corsica.' His name is Boswell. He forced himself on me in Paris in spite of my teeth and my doors. And it would seem he took umbrage at something about Rousseau. I laughed, applausively I believe, at a saying of Voltaire. When Rousseau thrust one of his verses beneath the nose of our Ferney wit—an 'Ode to Immortality' it was—Voltaire exclaimed, 'Ah! here is a letter which will never reach its address!' My mirth over this gave Boswell vast offense. He told Rousseau and exhorted that somnambulist of literature and politics to assail me. But as Boswell came no more to bother my idleness, I forgave him. One must not so much as nod to him, however; it will bring him battering at one's door."

"Really, Horry," laughs Gray, "you paint this Boswell in terror's very colors!"

"Avoid him," returns Walpole; "you will even find him more dreadful than his picture. His one redeeming vice is a hatred of Goldsmith."

"And that reminds me of the theatre," says Gray. "Have you come to the end with your tragedy, 'The Mysterious Mother'?"

"It is finished," says Walpole, "but will never be played. Chute likes it, and I, myself, would be overpleased to see it walk the stage. But I cannot endure the mountebank Garrick, who lets nothing come out but his own wretched stuff, or that of poor creatures duller than himself, who suffer him to cut and slash their pieces at his pleasure."

At the other table they are preparing to depart. Hume shakes Wilkes by the hand.

"I wish you good fortune," says Hume. "I return again to Paris, where in the course of the Summer I hope to hear you have grown so much the conservative that you love the King."

"Love the King!" repeats Wilkes, in mirth and scorn. "Man, Davie! I love him now! I love the King so well that I hope never to see another in his place."

IV

It is March the 18th. Fish Crawford, proud of his French cook, gives a dinner at his house in Clifford street. The company is as good as the dinner, which is saying much. There are their graces of Grafton and Roxburghe, my lords of March and Ossory, Sir Joshua Reynolds; there are Gillie Williams and Goldsmith and Garrick and Hume and Walpole and many more.

There prevails an elegance almost perfect about the repast. A polite though earnest murmur of encomium goes about, whereat the amiable Crawford, founder of the feast, reddens with pleasure. The plate is admired, the wines are praised; the dinner proceeds—a matchless procession of kitchen arts and sciences.

Goldsmith and Garrick sit across from each other. There has been bitterness between them. They know they are to be reconciled and so look at each other with timid smiles, paving the way for that hand grasp and mutual forgiveness which are to come. At last Sir Joshua, bowing to host Crawford as one who craves permission, rises and with no preamble offers the toast composite:

“The healths of Doctor Goldsmith and Mr. Garrick.”

The two toasts extend their right hands and the grip of each is warm; with their left hands they clink glasses. Thus, without ceremony, is the deed of reconciliation, sought of each and planned by the pacific Sir Joshua, signed, sealed and delivered. Goldsmith and Garrick release each other's hands. The poet is brimful of delight over a recovered friend; the actor is sourly considering why Sir Joshua named him last in the toast. Walpole looks on both with the smile of covert unbelief; he likes neither Goldsmith nor Garrick, nor does he believe in their new friendship.

There is a common rattle of talk. Grafton discusses guarded politics in low tones with his grace of Rox-

burghe. March speaks eloquently of the Rena and the Tondino; and then, leaving women for horses, becomes brilliant concerning Newmarket. Walpole is sparring with my lord of Ossory over some late mistakes of government in its treatment of the colonies. One hears him say:

“I believe England will one day fall before New England.”

Fish Crawford, the host, shouts a story of Foote's into the ear-trump of Reynolds. The great painter shakes dubious wig because of the odor of Rabelais.

“Sir, it is a good story,” says Reynolds; “but Foote's style of conversation is vulgar and his wit for the most indecent.”

Garrick, fearing and loathing Foote, is so pleased by this that he forgives Reynolds in his narrow heart for putting him second in the toast.

Some one speaks of Selwyn, whose seat in the House is being fiercely contested by a Gloucester carpenter.

“What this beast of a timber merchant means by wanting to go to Parliament,” observes Gillie Williams, who considers Selwyn's troubles his own, “no one may tell. George asked him the question, but he would not answer. Such animals are monstrously obstinate. He has not an idea above a square foot of Norway pine; but to beat him will cost George a hatful of rouleaux.”

Now there is gossip about the arrest of Lord Baltimore before Sir John Fielding on complaint of a shop-girl; now comes the mysterious retirement of Chatham; now the robbery at General Conway's has the carpet for consideration. Meanwhile the wine goes round.

Garrick puffs with secret vanity while he relates how yesterday he was “commanded” by the Lord Chamberlain to arrange something at Drury Lane for the entertainment of that evil dwarf, the degenerate King of Denmark, whose claim on England lies in the fact that he is wedded to King George's younger sister. Garrick imitates the weariness of disgust

and, to point a personal importance, concludes:

"Four days' notice! You see what heads they have! With Prichard dying at Bath and 'Pivy' Clive leaving the stage for good and Abington, Dancer, Barry and the rest all scattered like blackbirds, I am put to a fine stew, I promise you! However, I've caught up little Bellamy and Woodward, and these, with what I can myself do, must stay the dramatic stomach of the Royal Dane."

Then Garrick, replying to a question of Williams's, tells of Rousseau's visit two years before; how he had the nervous and affected Frenchman at Drury Lane; how Rousseau cried over *Lusignan*, and laughed at *Chalkstone*, and hung absurdly from the box with a pretended interest in the stage, but a real anxiety lest people should not observe him; how Mrs. Garrick clung desperately to his coat-tails for fear lest the extravagant and laughable egotist fall into the pit.

At Garrick's right abides a gentleman, sallow, dark, whose Irish face agrees with his Dublin birth. He eats sparingly, talks less and drinks wine not at all. He is not old, being under thirty, and has work at an inferior desk in the War Office. Also, he owns a gray, intelligent eye, wherein broods a fashion of malignant honesty and never a spark of humor, which ever and again he turns with very quiet hatefulness on his grace of Grafton. The taciturn young Irishman is that Philip Francis who will, four years later, scourge Grafton and his vices of state over the signature of *Junius*. He will even write a private, high epistle to Garrick himself in reproof of a meddling spirit displayed by that comedian; and Garrick, who fears nothing so much as being flogged in types, will twitter with the terror of it until Woodfall, printer, assures him the Awful Unknown intends no further notice of him. Fish Crawford, however, has no seers with him to dine and no one is capable of any foretelling identification of the coming

Junius. He speaks but once during the repast and then his speech is bitter. Walpole draws the fire with a covert sarcasm which he aims at Grafton.

"That man, who is privately vile," says Walpole, glancing at his grace, "will not be publicly pure. I go with Burke when he asserts that 'Private honor is the only pure foundation of public trust, and friendship no mean step toward patriotism.'"

"Friendship! patriotism!" The terms seem to arouse the gloomy interest of Francis. "They are well linked," he cries; "they mean much the same. What is patriotism but self-seeking? And what is friendship save that love you bear your neighbor's money, wine or wife?"

Goldsmith, ever odd in mental starts, is, no one may say why, to be reminded by this cynicism of sick and failing Laurence Sterne. Goldsmith looks abruptly at his host and stammers:

"And, by the way, how goes the health of Sterne?"

"I know not," replies the smiling Crawford, while a common ripple of mirth goes over the guests; "truly, I know not. But we may drink his health, if you like; or we may even send to ask, since his rooms are at closest hand in Bond street."

"Suppose we send," says Goldsmith, and a footman goes to Bond street with the compliments of the company and an inquiry as to the health of the author of *Shandy*.

The messenger returns, a bit whitened of cheek and dampened of brow. He tells of what he saw and heard. He stood in the doorway of the sick Shandian. There was the couch with its wasted burden. A French girl—nobly beautiful—bent above, while her tears fell on a pinched face. Then a thin arm was raised as though to ward a blow and a thin voice cried, "Now it comes!" Then there was quiet, save for the sobs of the beautiful girl. And then poor *Tristram* was no more. The company receives the tale of the footman in silence; tears come to the sympathetic Goldsmith.

While the footman is away, Grafton wagers odds with March in hundreds that the well-loved Shandian is better. As the story ends, March rises:

"Fill up your glasses, my friends," says March, and his manner is bravely tender and decorous. Then, turning to Grafton: "Your grace has won, and poor Sterne is better." Then, to all: "And since we may not drink his health, let us drink to his fadeless fame."

V

"WILKES and Liberty!" is the cry. The mob flows up and down the City streets. It is the mob exultant; Wilkes, defeated for the City, is elected for Middlesex. Wherefore the weavers of Spitalfields and others of their greasy, mechanical sort give themselves to wildest joy. "Wilkes and Liberty!"

The rejoicings have a vicious and revengeful side. The Lord Mayor's house is stoned and the mob batters its doors in vain strivings for entrance with intent to sack and pillage. Nor is the Lord Mayor the only hated one nor the Mansion the sole hub of savage interest. Every Scotch window is riddled with stones. My Lord of Bute's and the Duke of Argyll's are first bombarded and then made to illuminate in glory of Wilkes. There are stormy riotings and stones are flying thick about Cumberland House; while at that edifice of Northumberland the duke and his duchess are forced to draw beer for the rioters and then drink with them to the triumph of liberty and the elevation of Wilkes.

The train bands of London are ordered to various scenes of turmoil. They go; and, arriving, they join the rioters and swell the general roar, "Wilkes and Liberty!" More violence and more broken glass; the streets surge and stagger with tumult.

The Austrian ambassador, fatuously secure in mind because of his position, pushes inquisitively yet injudiciously into Piccadilly. He is hooted, stoned, his coach upset, and he retires, curiosity fully fed and ears

ringing with "Wilkes and Liberty!" watchwords whereof he knows and cares nothing; and he next day tells the British Foreign Office, in a heated remonstrance, of his knocks and bruises.

On this evening, rife of flying flints and busy with mobbish din, Lord Chesterfield and Horace Walpole, at the latter's house in Arlington street, are comfortable over claret. They as yet lack an official announcement from Brentford, yet each knows enough of events to be aware that their great wager with the Duke of Grafton and the Earl of March is safely housed. As both love money and triumph, our folk of Blackheath and of Strawberry Hill are in highest spirits. While awaiting the advent of Grafton and March, their converse comes light and free. Walpole is bantering the old Chesterfield temporarily to remove himself bag and baggage to Strawberry Hill.

"It is ill talking of pilgrimage to a man of seventy-four," says Chesterfield. "And, besides, I love Blackheath."

"Blackheath!" returns Walpole, with pretended scorn. "Prithee, what may one do at Blackheath? Surrender to Satan, or go to church, I suppose—give one's self up to the gout or the Methodists! Sir, you call yourself old. Then should you unite with our colony of ancients at Strawberry Hill. There is the aged Kitty Clive; there is my equally senile self; there are dowagers who roost all about. Come, and you shall never want wrinkled gaiety and old tales. We will talk of the price of oats and discuss stale newspapers and give ourselves to a fat and formerly retirement."

"Verily, Horry!" and Chesterfield almost shakes his gentility with a downright laugh, "for a gentleman who has but the other day passed fifty, you give forth like a grandsire."

"But truly," returns Walpole, as he fills his glass, "I do feel as old as the Tower. I hesitate to go among the young folk of the times. I am out of fashion and as strange with them as if I talked the dialect of Chaucer.

Even wit and humor have their day, like hoop and farthingale, and then go out while new wit takes their places; and so with men. The boys at White's and Brooks's already laugh at Selwyn's *mots* only by tradition. For myself, I would no more talk before them than I would dance before them. I tell you, we oldsters should club together for countenance; we should exclude the present and comfort ourselves with stories of those brave days we have known. Faith! I shall talk this over with Selwyn when he's again in town."

"Which reminds me," says Chesterfield; "I learned that Selwyn overran his Gloucester timber-seller and is sure of his seat again."

"Aye!" retorts Walpole. "Selwyn the wit, Thrale the brewer, Burke the patriot, Wilkes the anarchy and Charlie Fox the boy are all successful; a various support indeed whereon to lean a state!"

Grafton and March, with Gillie Williams, are announced.

"He who brings riches to a house needs no apology," says the sprightly March, as Walpole greets the three. "Horry, I was just telling Grafton that Lord Chesterfield and you were victors. I heard it and knew it in the cries of the mob."

"Yes," adds Grafton, with a cheerfulness equal to March's; "we capitulate. March and I make unconditional surrender. Indeed, we are so abject in our defeat that, together with Gillie, we have three several times abetted riot and shouted for 'Wilkes and Liberty!' as we journeyed hither. It was a ceremony on which the public insisted and, I'm proud to say, we complied."

"I am glad your grace was so com-
plaisant," replies Walpole. "The more, since it brings you safe and sound. But, really, Grafton," and Walpole grows serious, "you folk who have the responsibility of government should find a lesson here. This is a mob celebrating victory; for all its rudeness, it is good-natured. Suppose it were avenging wrongs, what then? Man! it would destroy the town!"

"The town will last our day," responds the gay Grafton. "That morn will dawn when, doubtless, the mob will tear it down. Then let England go as go all earthly things. The mob is the British pagod; I bend the knee before it with the rest. The mob giveth, the mob taketh away; blessed be the name of the mob!"

"It is not the mob," says Chesterfield, shaking his old head; "it is not the mob, your grace, which will destroy England; it is the few. Not in your time, not in your children's time, yet a day shall come when England will be borne down and fall like Rome with the weight of her own luxury. No craft of state, not even honesty, may save her. Luxury is not a vice, it's a disease; and I believe with Cato that a people's days are counted when a fish sells for more than an ox."

"Gads buds! friends," ejaculates the volatile Williams, "the howls of these criminals have made you gloomy. Cheer yourselves with claret as I do. Why let the mob depress you?" Then, to Chesterfield: "Was it not you who said the mob is seldom right, and then only for a wrong reason?"

"Does the mob not prove that truth to-night?" responds Chesterfield. "It breaks Bute's windows for being Scotch, when that is the one lone thing he could not help."

"Well, gentlemen," observes Grafton, as he, with March and Williams, prepares to depart, "there would appear to live no doubts of the double present fact of 'Wilkes and Liberty!' and March and I will send you your guineas to-morrow."

"Your grace will choose your convenience as to that," says the polite Walpole. And then, laughingly: "As I came from Lady Hertford's this evening, the jubilant commons destroyed my coach—as beautiful as ever came out of Long Acre! I will have me a new one with part of my share, and I'll never ride in it without thinking on your grace and my lord of March, or thanking 'Wilkes and Liberty!'"

FUTILITY

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

WHERE the sea came in with a lunge and plunge
A clam was wed to a spinster sponge,
Whose every fibre (and cell as well)
Was filled with love of her husband's shell.
The fishes around that clam who swam
Invented this exquisite epigram:
"They are not a congenial pair; but there!
It is that she is stuck on his shell for fair!"
(As a matter of fact, this was no sham,
For she was attached to that hardshell clam!)

But the clam was a clam of a mind unkind,
To all of his helpmate's glances blind.
He smiled that singular style of smile
That the male affects when a thing's worth while;
But not on his spouse his view he threw—
He flattered himself that the sex he knew,
And a sea-anemone bland, at hand,
He was firmly convinced would understand!
(As a matter of fact, she scorned romance
And smilingly sneered at his pleading glance.)

Now, this went on for a year, or near,
And the situation was far from clear,
Till the sponge began to woo and sue,
"You must confess I'm growing on you!"
While the clam but coddled his shameless flame
For that highly contemptuous other dame.
Now, such neglect shouldn't kill, but still,
In the case of a woman, it always will.
(As a matter of fact, he's a man of heart
If a knight keeps mourning and Eve apart!)

Because from his lips no word she heard
She grieved in a fashion the most absurd.
Although, in his shell, at her cough he'd scoff,
It was plain to the world she was falling off.
At her love and the cost of her gown, he'd frown;
He would not settle up, he would not settle down!
But society couldn't excuse the news
When she left him, because of his selfish views.
(As a matter of fact, where the breakers lunged,
From her family group she was soon ex-sponged.)

THE SMART SET

But that was a year or so ago.
 The trio are all of them here on show,
 Each in a nice little clean tureen
 In a big museum of things marine,
 With labels proclaiming their social strata—
 She's *Gossypina Caniculata*;
 Her rival's *Metridium Marginatum*,
 And her husband's *Cardium Substriatum*.
 (As a matter of fact, in jars they're stored—
 That's when adorers are not adored!)

Oh, Lady Disdain, with your wise young eyes,
 When we shall have done with our loves and lies,
 When we—and one other—lie near, my dear,
 Will your lips yet curl in that smiling sneer?
 Will her eyes yet search me and yet be wet?
 Shall we all remember, or all forget?
 Shall all we have tasted of thrall or gall
 Have made much difference, after all?
 (As a matter of fact, we shall never see
 What the labels say that we wear, all three!)



“WHY weepst thou, woman?”

“My lord will be buried this day.”

“My wife was buried yesterday. To-morrow I must get me another.”

Whereupon the widow shook the ashes from her shining hair, dried her eyes and, looking into the face of the widower, smiled.

“I will be at home to-morrow, all day,” she said.



PAMPERED

“DON'T you think Mrs. Pettington overfeeds her dog?”

“Overfeeds him? Why, she's worried whenever he isn't able to eat too much.”



THE GIRL IN THE COUNTRY

IN her Adamless Eden there's no chance to spoon,
 Which suits not this Mother Eve's daughter;
 She must either make love to the man in the moon,
 Or else to the buoy in the water.

J. J. O'CONNELL.

THE RENUNCIATION

By Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky

THE dull wraiths of fog shifted uneasily; sometimes they were still, and again they fled, like the uneasy spirits of the dead, up and down the silent, deserted streets. As the day grew darker the fog came closer to the city, nestling down round the buildings, hiding their grim, stern outlines and softening their unpleasing exteriors. Now and then a light shone dimly through the heavy mist; sometimes from a window or a street lamp, and again from some passing carriage or the torch of a link-boy.

One of the hansoms that crept slowly through the streets, its lights showing ever so dully in the enveloping fog, finally drew up at the Martin Hotel, Woburn Place, Russell Square. From the hansom the doorway could be dimly seen, for a feeble light was burning in the vestibule. When the man got out, he added a *douceur* to his fare and handed it to the cabby. Then he went swiftly up the steps and into the hallway of the Martin Hotel. The lounging hall-boy straightened up and rose to his feet, and as the man entered the lift the attendant greeted him with a pleasant, "Good evening, m'sieu'."

The lift went groaning up the shaft and the hall was again silent. The fog had stolen its way into the very house, and the lights shone with a dullness that but added to the gloom of the London night.

In the dining-room of the Martin Hotel preparations were going on for dinner and the noisy rattle of crockery and silver came out into the hall. The clerk behind the desk yawned

uneasily, hoping that the night clerk would come soon, that he might find his way to his home in Bayswater and spend the evening with his bride of but three weeks. As he yawned he remembered that there were letters in the box for the man who had just come in. He took these, went around to the lift and handed them to the boy, bidding him give them to the "M'sieu'."

There was but one "M'sieu'" at the Martin Hotel; foreigners there were in plenty, but the "M'sieu'" and the "Madame" stood alone in their dignity; the other foreigners were known by their names. But then these other foreigners had never had that great and powerful person, the Austrian ambassador, call on them and spend many hours in their company.

At last the noise of preparation ceased in the dining-room and the doors were thrown open. The lift clattered and wheezed many times up and down its shaft, bringing the guests to dinner. On the last trip three individuals descended alone, the three whom the hotel folk designated simply as the "M'sieu'," the "Madame" and the "little M'sieu'."

And they were good to look on, this family. First came the "Madame," tall and stately, her years barely beginning to show in the few white hairs lacing the heavy masses of brown that rose above her handsome face, with its clear features and air of race. This was the mother. Of her sons, the elder was tall, slender, dark of hair and eye, and with skin the color of white ivory. The

younger was a lad of twelve, with hair of tawny gold, blue-gray eyes and a skin in which the rose and white blended to produce the unspoiled complexion of healthy childhood. These three were Madame de Nulle, Alajos de Nulle and Aribert de Nulle.

As the de Nulles entered the dining-room, those who were at their tables looked up, but none offered to speak. It was long since known in the Martin Hotel that Madame de Nulle and her sons desired no acquaintance with their fellow-guests. If spoken to, they responded in French, courteously but coldly. Yet the servants knew that both could speak to them in well-chosen English.

Occasionally, the other guests would read in the papers that Monsieur Alajos de Nulle had been among the guests of the Austrian ambassador when all the other names represented the great world. But it was alone that Alajos de Nulle was to be found among the guests at the Austrian embassy. Madame de Nulle never appeared even at the embassy, though both the ambassador and his wife called frequently at the hotel and treated Madame de Nulle with great deference. At first it was a rumor, then a whispered certainty and at last a settled matter that the de Nulles were of some great family and lived in quiet at the Martin for family reasons unknown—but knowingly guessed at.

On this night of fog the de Nulles sat at their dinner in silence. Alajos mechanically tasted a few spoonfuls of soup, nibbled at his fish and barely touched the balance of his dinner.

His thoughts were of those at table with him, for his eyes watched his handsome mother and fastened firmly on the splendid lineaments of his boy-brother. But what his thoughts were only he knew, for an inscrutable smile played around his lips and lingered in the light of his eyes.

At last the dinner ended and, with an old-world grace, he held his arm to his mother and slowly passed with her out of the dining-room. Then the lift again wheezed and rattled up

its shaft as it bore the de Nulles back to their rooms. They never sat in the "sumptuous drawing-rooms," with the rest of the guests.

When the de Nulles reached their apartments the mother put her hand on her son's shoulder, and he threw his arm about her waist and drew her to him. She smiled—for what mother is not happy when her son's arm holds her close? But she knew there was some burden weighing on his spirits.

"Alajos, my man-child, what is it? Of what are you thinking?" she softly asked. Alajos smiled gently, patted her on her cheek and tenderly kissed her.

"Come, let us sit down and I will tell you," he said. He drew up a big chair for her, placed a stool at her feet, rested his head on her knees, his dark, splendid eyes looking into hers. He was silent for some moments, then turned his head and saw the gray fog piled against the windows of their tiny parlor. Finally, he spoke. His voice was low and the words that fell from his lips were in the beloved tongue of his fatherland—far-off Austria.

"Mother mine, do you remember that the fog of life has accompanied us for the ten dreary years that have passed since last we saw Vienna? Do you remember the pain with which we came to this land of darkness, of sorrow and of trials?" The mother's hand played gently with the dark hair that fell over the young man's brow; this hand caressed as no hand but a mother's can caress. "Do you remember what it was you gave up for yourself when you came here; which, however, you would not give up for me or for Aribert, saying that we could choose our own destinies?" The mother's hand played no longer with the dark hair; it lay silent, and her son felt the quickened throb of her pulse. "Do you remember, mother mine, what you told me when I came of age, four long years past?"

The mother answered at last, but

the word of assent came through parched lips and the tongue that uttered it was dry and fevered.

"I told you then," went on the son, "that I would abide by the decisions you had made; that I would live as you have lived, denying that which should be, because I would bring no word of reproach upon him who is still." Again the word of assent came painfully. Then the son rose to his feet, his hand threw back the hair fallen on his forehead, moist with the perspiration of extreme emotion. His eyes shone with a spirit of fever, his hands pulsed and trembled; but his bearing was firm and strong.

"Madame, my mother," he said, his voice clear and low, "may I ask you to give me back my word, so I may claim that which is mine—that which the blood in my veins makes mine; that which the very lines in my face proclaim as mine?"

The mother shuddered in her chair, then drew herself up from her reclining position. Her voice came to her and her calm, proud face showed that she had mastery over this surge of feeling. She smiled.

"Yes, my son," she answered, "your word is given back. You may claim that which is yours. A son of the old house shall again stand in the grand hall of our home in the Renn-gasse, and a son of our house shall again stand in the dark chamber of the Schloss Zargeau and swear that he will be a true son of the house of Zargeau and Trochenfels. Yes, my son, you will be Alajos, head of the princely House of Zargeau and Trochenfels; and I, Elizabeth, shall be dowager of Zargeau and Trochenfels. For, you see, I, a mother, know full well what has caused your decision. But come, lie at my feet, Alajos of Zargeau and Trochenfels, and tell me of her on whose brow you will bind the silver circlet that belongs to her who is the spouse of Zargeau and Trochenfels."

The son threw himself again at his mother's feet and caressing her

white and slender hands, told her the story of how he came to change his decision; that decision which would change him from Alajos de Nulle—Alajos of Nothing—to Alajos of Zargeau and Trochenfels, prince of that name, lord of vast domains and hereditary grand master of the Imperial household to him who holds the dual crown of Austria and Hungary.

"It is a simple story," he said, "for it is the tale of the love that a man bears to a woman whom he would make his wife and would make mother of the coming generations of those who will bear the name of Zargeau and Trochenfels.

"It began a year ago, mother mine. You remember the night when Count Von Furstmann gave his garden fête; I, Alajos de Nulle, was bidden to be present among those few from all London who were considered by the Austrian ambassador as worthy to meet the Crown Prince of our fatherland. You remember how he pressed my hand and said, wonderingly, 'It is a face that I know,' as he looked into my eyes?

"But then, that was nothing; for did not Stephanie come into my life that night? She is queen of my soul and he was but a prince of a royal house——"

"And my cousin," interrupted the mother, brokenly.

"Aye, and your cousin, madame, my mother," said the son. And he rose to his feet, knelt and kissed her hand. Then he again took his seat and went on with his story.

"Stephanie of Carlstein, they call her, mother mine. You know the house of Carlstein, of the castle on the Dark River?—Ah, she was there. She was young, fair of face and form——"

"Aye, and as fair of face and form as was her mother, Amelie, who was my dame of honor," said the woman, pensively.

"But I have said no word to her," murmured Alajos, "spoken no word of mouth—though my eyes and her eyes have met, and you know the language of the eyes!"

"Yes," whispered the mother, "I have known the language of the eyes," and her hand brushed away the tears that came suddenly as she thought of the days long dead, of the days that were dead forever, dead with him who was still.

"You know, mother mine, that Alajos of Nothing cannot ask Stephanie of Carlstein to be mistress of the lordly domain of Naught. He who would win her of Carlstein must go to her with an ancient name."

"It is so," said the mother. Then a thought came to her and she asked: "Do you know what day to-morrow is?"

"Yes," he answered, "it is the twenty-first of November, the anniversary of my birth."

Each thinking in silence, the mother and the son heard "Big Ben" toll out the hour of midnight. Then Alajos drew her into his arms, kissed her, and they went to their own rooms. But sleep did not come, for Elizabeth Marguerite lay in her bed-chamber and remembered the kisses that had lain on her lips from those of him now dead and cold, whom the world thought the last prince of the House of Zargeau and Trochenfels. And in his room Alajos lay awake, dreaming of the day when the kisses of Stephanie of Carlstein would lie on the lips of him whom the world would know to be the new prince of the old House of Zargeau and Trochenfels. And thus the night passed.

When morning came the thick fog still lay over the city. Yet, with the regularity of years, a carriage drew up at the entrance of the hotel and the Count Karl von Furstmann, ambassador of the Emperor-King of Austria and Hungary, clad in the full uniform of his diplomatic rank, descended and asked that his name be announced to Monsieur Alajos de Nulle. He was immediately shown to the private parlor of the de Nulles, a little chamber hung with old tapestries and adorned with rare paintings, relics of other days.

Alajos alone waited for the count. When Alajos held out his hand he suffered the count to kiss it, a thing that he had never allowed before. Then the count asked for "Madame Elizabeth." Alajos smiled gravely and said: "Madame, my mother, cannot see you this morning." Then he waved for von Furstmann to be seated and drew a chair up by the count's side. But the count rose when Alajos was seated. He bowed low.

"Alajos of Zargeau and Trochenfels," said he, "have I your permission to announce to the Emperor-King that you will claim your own?"

Alajos smiled.

"Pray be seated, my dear count," said he, "I would talk with you before I answer. I shall state a few facts, which you will confirm; for I know them to be true.

"It was thirty years ago that an archduchess of the royal house of Austria was wedded to the reigning prince of a German principality. For two years she lived with him, bearing his brutality, his drunkenness, his wanton behavior and his demoniac temper.

"At the end of that time she could endure it no longer; she fled from the capital of the petty state over which her husband ruled. But when she reached Paris, she met there a man with whom she had played in her childhood, whom she had loved in her girlhood, but whom she had put aside when a prime minister wedded her to the 'Swine of Tarlheim.'

"For two years the lady lived with the man whom she loved. They made their home in a quiet nook in the south of France, where no one knew their identity and where they were known simply as Monsieur and Madame de Nulle. At the end of that time they heard of the death of the 'Swine of Tarlheim'—slain by a wanton in a drunken revel. It was then that Monsieur and Madame de Nulle traveled to Paris and there, with you and another as witnesses, were quietly married in a chapel near the Seine. A year later a son was born. The lady

was Elizabeth Marguerite of Austria; the man, he whom the world thinks the last prince of the old race of Zargeau and Trochenfels." Alajos paused.

The count rose to his feet. "Your highness," he replied, "it is all as you have said. But I see from your tone that your answer has been changed from the answer your mother gave me for twenty years, and from the one that you have given me for four. You know how, every year, I have caused the old palace on the Renngasse to be made ready to receive you, its rightful owner, and Madame Elizabeth, your mother. At last I have not made preparation in vain! Alajos of Zargeau and Trochenfels will claim his own, and the world shall know!"

"But wait," cried the young man; "when the world knows, what will it say? Will it censure or blame?" Count von Furstmann made no answer. "Ah, but it will ask," went on Alajos of Zargeau and Trochenfels, "why did they not proclaim their marriage when it was made? Why did they live all their lives in seclusion and quiet sometimes in an old château in Brittany and sometimes in the cold hills of Sweden?"

"That is easily explained, as you know," responded the count, "for they lived in that way because neither wished the glare or display of court life, and neither wished to be dragged from a life of happiness in each other's company."

Alajos smiled bitterly. "But would the world believe such an explanation?" he asked. "The world will say: 'Ah, well enough; but they lived quietly because there was no bond. And why should not an Emperor-King do what is in his power to save the name of a member of his family?' Ah, Count von Furstmann, is it not so, when I say that the world would smear those fifteen years of love and quiet happiness with vile, untrue reports?"

The ambassador made no answer. Then Alajos, with the brusqueness of his father, cried out: "Make answer, man! Make answer—truthfully!"

The count bowed his head. "Alas, what your highness says is only too true," he replied.

"And now the world believes that Madame Elizabeth died twenty-eight long years ago, and was buried with all ceremony in the state mausoleum at Solms-Tarlheim?"

"Yes, your highness," answered the ambassador.

Alajos turned and looked into the fog. Dimly he could see the sun through the enwrapping folds. Then he again faced the ambassador.

"Count von Furstmann," said he, calmly, "I shall not sacrifice the name of either him who is still, or of the one who has been dead to the world these many years. For the last time, Count von Furstmann, I bid you carry the message to the Emperor-King, that Alajos of Zargeau and Trochenfels will not claim his own."

"For the last time, your highness!" gasped von Furstmann.

A sweet, strange smile lay on Alajos's lips—it was the smile that had made Madame Elizabeth famous for itself alone—and he answered, softly:

"In the west there lies a new country. There, they tell me, are buried many strange stories and heart-breaks from the olden lands. It is there that I shall go, Count von Furstmann. It is there that I shall live as a simple citizen, honoring my fellow-men, fearing my God. There shall I marry and bring up a new race, a new family; a family that I hope will rise high in the annals of that new race, not because of their olden name, but because in them unknowingly will be the blood of the greatest of the Old World."

"But madame, your mother?" asked the ambassador.

"Madame, my mother," sighed Alajos, slowly. Then he held back a curtain. In a recess von Furstmann saw a pall, with the lighted candles burning at either end.

"Madame, my mother, died in my arms," said Alajos, simply. "She died while she slept."

Von Furstmann kissed the dead

hands that lay folded on the cold breast. "You are the wiser," he said, as he turned to Alajos. The tears streamed down his cheeks and splashed unheeded on the decorations that starred his breast.

And Stephanie of Carlstein kisses the crumbled leaves of what was once a rose—a rose that a gentleman, whom

she knew only as Alajos de Nulle, gave her one night when his eyes told her that he loved her and when hers told him the same tale.

Alajos and Aribert?

Who knows but you may brush arms with them, you who live in the new, strong land of America, you whose country holds many dead and buried tales of the Old World?



AT SEA

WE often strolled the upper deck
And watched the moonlight on the wave;
I came at Dulcie's call and beck
And made myself a willing slave.
I fancied quite she cared for me,
When I and Dulcie were at sea.

But now that we are on the land
And steamer-chairs are not in vogue,
With suitors, too, on every hand
To flirt with Dulcie—sly young rogue—
I wonder if she cares for me,
And find that I am still—at sea!

HENRY CLEVELAND WOOD.



EXPECTED MUCH

CITY NEPHEW—Well, Uncle Josh, does New York surpass your expectations?

UNCLE JOSH—Ye-es; but I ruther expected it would.



THE LATEST TERM

SHE—John and his wife have decided to separate.

HE—Ah, another case of mutual detachment.



FLORENCE—Do you think I have a perfect fit in this gown?

BILLY—You ought to; I had one when I paid the bill.

THE SUBJUGATION OF MOLLY

By Ethel Sigsbee

MOLLY was intended and designed for the species of woman that girls call "cute." Everything tended that way. She was tiny and plump, with a pair of child's eyes, blue and round, and a dear, saucy little face, made for laughing. Next to an angel—for of course she was that—Molly more closely resembled a kitten than anything else I can mention.

Yet just here did she make her greatest mistake; for, instead of living up to this same kittenishness which was her birthright, she sternly refused to recognize it. She scorned the rôle of soubrette for which she was designed and gave a somewhat overdone imitation of the dignified leading lady. It was too bad, for Molly as soubrette was irresistible.

If the queen of the fairies had, in the good old story-book way, asked Molly's dearest wish and proposed to grant it, she would have replied, promptly: "To be tall and have an aquiline nose."

Then, if the royal lady had reminded her that she had expressed two wishes, when only one was requested, and had, perhaps, administered a small lecture on the sin of greed, Molly would have hesitated a moment and then decided in favor of the nose. Noses were her hobby, and I have sometimes thought, most unjustly, no doubt, that Molly accepted me on the strength of mine. Hers was "tip-tilted, like the petal of a flower," but the fact that the poets had sung her praises comforted her not at all. However, though there was nothing to be done about

this provoking feature, Molly felt her five-feet-two could be aided. This she did by wearing such high heels to her boots as seriously to imperil her life and twisting her hair—what a brown, curly mass it was!—into a high knot on the top of her pretty head.

She also affected a very dignified manner—quite chilly she often was in her attempt at dignity. It was so at a certain ball, where she really succeeded in frightening away admirers by her *grande-dame* manner. Imagine Molly frightening any one! Indeed, I fear I might never have fallen in love with the dear girl myself if I had not seen her romping with some children—cheeks flaming, eyes sparkling, as she laughed until her curly hair tumbled in wild disorder over her shoulders. After this peep at the real Molly I would never allow her to freeze into the other.

"What was the game you were playing?" I would remark, blandly, when she would assume her most icy manner. "'Horse,' was it not, or was it 'Indians'?" And then poor Molly would remember she was only a dot of a thing and that her nose was distinctly pug, and would dimple into laughter.

Besides this distressing dignity, have I mentioned that Molly had a temper? Surely, such an acquisition would have done credit to the impressive person she aspired to be. It was not that she stormed, though I have seen her do so, but it was a rebellious, a stubborn temper, and when backed by her will—yes, among other things Molly had a will

—she was quite a formidable opponent in a contest. After several little matches—one I remember in which she coolly rang me off in the middle of a sentence when we were engaged in talking over the telephone—I resolved to mend Molly's ways and make her the peaceful, tractable little person she was originally intended to be. I had certain ideas as to what qualities were essential in a wife, and tractability was one. Molly must learn to bend her will to mine before we entered the state of matrimony.

I imparted all this to her one evening as we sat over a wood fire in her little drawing-room. Molly was sitting on my knee at the time, but before I had finished she had removed to a sofa some yards distant.

"I don't think wives should obey their husbands, any more than husbands should obey their wives," said Molly.

I had stated my views very gently and had hoped then to elaborate on them, but there was a positiveness in Molly's manner that made me almost wish I could change the subject.

"Of course, the husband should have constantly in mind the wishes of the wife," I said, soothingly, "but as the man is the older of the two—especially in our case—and the more experienced, the woman should look on him as her adviser and take his advice in all things. What other would have her welfare so much at heart?"

I should have known what to expect when I was allowed to make such a lengthy speech without interruption. I looked at Molly at its conclusion to see the effect of my reasoning. I cannot say it was as happy as I had anticipated. She was sitting very straight, holding a sofa pillow tightly; there were red spots on her cheeks and her eyes literally shot sparks of fire.

"There are five years and two months between us," she said, quickly. "To hear you, one would think there were a thousand. Everybody knows

—that is, everybody with any perception—" here Molly shot a look at me which singled me out as the miserable creature referred to—"that though a man and woman may be the same age, the woman is really the older."

I wonder who it was that made this idiotic statement—women set such store by it!

"I have been dictated to all my life," Molly continued, "and I don't propose to marry a nursery governess. I am not getting married to be trained in the way I should go, especially when it isn't the way I wish to go. When a girl is twenty she has some ideas and a will of her own."

No one would have accused Molly of lacking either.

"She has had experience," Molly continued, "and knows the difference between right and wrong, and I don't propose to be dictated to by a mere man." Here, conscious that she was repeating herself, Molly paused and sat breathing quickly, still clutching the pillow.

Clearly, the time had arrived for the delivery of some of those strong and convincing arguments I had thought of before coming, but none was present to me in my hour of peril. Any one entering the room just here might have supposed that I was in the wrong and that Molly was but bringing a wretch to justice. This would never do, so I roused myself.

"My dear child—" I began. This proved a most unfortunate beginning, for Molly leaped to her feet, flung the sofa pillow at me and, in a burst of rage, left the room.

If I had weakened heretofore, this burst, of what I choose to call ungovernable passion, clearly showed me where my duty lay. Therefore, I neither called nor followed her. I merely replaced the pillow on the sofa and, taking my hat, left the house. I think I should state, to my credit, that I did not bang the door.

On arriving home I wrote the following on a slip of paper and put it in my mirror:

I, Richard Staple, will not call on Mary Marden until she acknowledges herself in the wrong.

From this it might appear that I was not quite sure of myself, but then—I knew Molly.

Though secure in the feeling that I was in the right, I cannot say I enjoyed myself the week following, particularly as Molly seemed in no great haste to confess her fault. Indeed, from rumors I gathered, she was not even brooding over her sins, but was going about a great deal with a certain Jack Shipley—a great beast of a fellow, but a vast favorite with girls. Not that I had ever heard anything against him, but I had never liked him—great, hulking brute!

One night I saw her at a theatre, whither we were to have gone together. She seemed to have thrown away much of her dignity and was frisking like a kitten, and a somewhat unprincipled kitten at that. However, Shipley seemed to like it.

Every night I would take down the slip of paper to read it. It was not that I felt my courage waning, but I thought it a good thing to do.

Just one week from the day of Molly's display of temper I received a note written in a familiar hand. Molly always wrote a hand that might have belonged to a giantess, it was so large, and it was unmistakable. I read the memorandum which I had written. But when I had opened and read Molly's note I tore the former up. I needed no incentive, I felt, for the future.

The note ran thus:

MY DEAR DICKY,

Whatever has become of you? How hard at work you must be to stay away from me so long. Let's see, has it been three or four days?

I am so sorry, for now I can't see you when you come, as I am going away. It's a house-party in Virginia—won't it be fun this time of year?

Lots of the girls are going, and the men are Shipley and others.

I'll be back in a week, so try to live without me till then, won't you?

I think a little jaunt will do me good, I've had such a poky Winter.

You don't grudge me this pleasure, I know.

Yours happily,

MOLLY.

It was certainly a thoroughly disagreeable letter, and it might have been a matter of opinion as to which was the most disagreeable part of it. But I think "Shipley and others," for sheer indecency, stood preëminent. Somehow those three confounded words stuck in my brain, and when at a reception that evening a lady asked me what I could get her from the supper-room, I replied, blankly, "Shipley and others," naturally to her intense amazement.

Molly stayed her week out and two days over it; then she came home. I saw her when she stepped off the train—I happened to be at the station—and if that beast wasn't with her! I stood behind a pile of trunks and they passed very near. I thought she looked a little pale and she was not frisking, neither was she dignified; indeed, I thought she looked a little sad.

"Late hours," I growled, inwardly; but, in spite of myself, I felt my heart going out to her, and that evening, as the little pale face rose in my brain, I found it advisable to write another memorandum. It ran as follows:

I, Richard Staple, do solemnly resolve that I will on no account write to or call on Mary Marden until she apologizes in full for her outrageous behavior; and, in the event of any communications being received from said Mary Marden, will not answer them.

Then I went to bed and lay awake for hours—something I had eaten, I suppose.

I received no more notes from Molly, and time wore on. It wore very slowly. I removed all pictures of her from my room. The one with the serious expression went first. It made me think of her face at the station, and the thought that she might be ill would rise unbidden as I looked at it. I thought I would let the others stay. But one night I caught the saucy one smiling up at me in such an inviting manner that it must needs follow the other into banishment. The one on which was scribbled in the big, bold

hand, "Miss Dignity," went next. In this Molly had her skirts swept tightly about her, in a way to increase her height quite noticeably, and wore her tallest hat. It made me long to cry, "Was it 'horse' or 'Indians,' Molly?" and see her dignity give way to dimples. So I put it away, and then the others followed, one by one, until there were no Mollies to creep into my heart. And yet, there she stayed, just the same!

Two weeks from the day we parted I called on Molly.

I do not know what excuse I can offer, but I do remember the idea occurred to me that I might free her from her engagement. However, as I left my room I did not dare face that bit of paper which registered a resolve I was about to break.

In the drawing-room at last! There was the piano, with Molly's music strewn over the top; there was the guitar; there the sofa—and the pillow, there it was! I stooped to tie my boot-lacing, and am afraid I kissed that same pillow.

Molly entered and I rose somewhat hurriedly. She wore her tallest heels and looked imposing. Her head was held high and her hair was still higher.

"I was tying my boot," I remarked.

"You were kissing the pillow," said Molly.

I thought this tactless and changed the subject.

"I came to ask you to free me," I said.

"I haven't time this morning," said Molly.

"From that I am to suppose you love me too much to free me," I said.

"Not at all," quoth Molly, sharply. "You are free," and she waved her arm with quite a regal gesture.

I wriggled my shoulders and took a turn about the room.

"It doesn't feel any different," I said, in mock surprise.

"It does to me," said Molly, acidly.

"Poor girl!" I said, pityingly.

"I meant I was relieved. Don't be stupid!"

"It will be a strain, but I will do my best," I rejoined, meekly.

Just then the door-bell rang.

"Suppose we go into the dining-room," suggested Molly; "it may be a caller."

"Yes," said I, "breaking an engagement is too serious a matter to be interrupted."

"It is best to get poky things over with." This from Molly.

Molly perched herself on the dining-room table and swung her feet. She was deliciously undignified.

"Will you be just as quick about it as you can?" she said, suddenly.

"About what?" I asked, starting.

I had been looking at Molly's mouth and speculating as to whether I should kiss it.

"To finish this transaction, I meant," continued Molly. "This is my busy day. I can't sit here much longer."

"There is only one other matter I can think of," I said—and kissed her.

"You forget we aren't engaged," said Molly, reproachfully.

"I hadn't forgotten—I was flirting."

"Oh!" said Molly. She stuck out her slippers to admire their buckles. "Do you often flirt so?" she asked, biting her lip.

"It's what I'm best at," I assured her. "I leave it to you."

"I don't care to be judge," she said, coldly, leaning away from me.

As she really meant it, I strolled off. I poured out some ice water that stood on the sideboard and drank it; then dabbled a little of it on my wrists and temples.

Molly watched me with studied unconcern for a while. Then curiosity overcame her. "Silly, what are you doing?" she commanded.

"I am endeavoring to become warm," I replied.

Molly dimpled in spite of herself. "It isn't so cold over here now," she said, softly.

"I am afraid to try again," I said, leaning against the water-pitcher; "a frozen child dreads the ice."

Molly looked impatient. "Dicky," she cried, "come here!"

"Richard is my Christian name," I said, blandly, "by which I am called by relatives and friends. To all others I am Mr. Staple."

"I'd like to pinch you," said Molly.

I went over to her to see if she would carry out her threat. She put her thumb and finger on each cheek and pinched very gently.

"Now shut your eyes," she said.

I closed them with alacrity, knowing what was coming. "What a forward girl!" I said.

Molly leaned her head on my shoulder. "Don't joke any more," she whispered. And then, as my arms went around her, "I want to tell you I'm sorry, Dicky."

So, being a wise man, I forgave her and we renewed our engagement. Molly deserted the table for her old place on my knee and, between laughter and some tears, she told me the story of her three weeks.

"And, oh, Dick, the house-party—that was the worst, dear, of all! I went only to spite you—yes, I am a bad girl, I know it—and I couldn't sleep for thinking of you. At last, out of sheer misery, I told Mr. Shipley all about it. He was very nice and sympathetic, said you were a fine fellow and advised me to write and make up."

"Shipley is a nice chap," I declared; "I always liked him. But you didn't——"

"Yes, I did. I wrote it this morning, the last one, I mean—I've written dozens—and was about to post it when I saw you coming."

Just my luck! Why hadn't I waited a day longer!

Suddenly Molly ran out of the room. When she returned I laughed aloud and caught her in my arms. She had pulled her curls down to a low knot on her neck and, in place of the high-heeled boots, wore little, heelless house-slippers.

"I suppose I am only a kitten, after all," she said, contentedly, as she nestled into my arms.

"Such a nice kitten," I interpolated.

"But a bad-tempered one—don't deny it!"

I didn't, but kissed her instead—it was non-committal.

Presently she gave a low laugh. "I'm in a fair way to be a poor, down-trodden little wife," she said.

But she isn't—heavens, no! Indeed, our friends, of whom Jack Shipley is one of the best, tell me I am hen-pecked. This, of course, is ridiculous. Still, I don't think Molly down-trodden—no, down-trodden would hardly be the word.



A MISTAKE

I LOOKED at a tramp on a bench in the Park,
Whose tatters about him were furled,
And I said, as I gazed at the hundreds about,
"You are flotsam washed up from the world."

He stared in surprise—perhaps it was scorn,

But he smiled in a pitying way;

"We are flotsam, no doubt, from the world," he replied,

"But scarcely 'washed up,' I should say."

WILLIAM J. LAMPTON.



SATAN dotes on puzzles; when he can snatch a moment, he spends it in trying to solve another woman.

HUSH!

HUSH, little wandering breeze;
 (Oh, the room of night is so still, still, still!)
 Sleep with the valley trees,
 You have danced with the pines on the hill.
 Hush, little wandering breeze,
 Sleep with the valley trees.

The wood waits dim and cool,
 (Oh, the breath of fields is so faint, faint, faint!)
 Stay not to kiss the pool;
 Listen not to the white lilies' plaint.
 The wood waits dim and cool;
 Stay not to kiss the pool.

Hush, little wandering breeze,
 (Oh, the soul of night is so deep, deep, deep!)
 Child of the stars and seas,
 We have worked, we have loved, let us sleep.
 Hush, little wandering breeze,
 Child of the stars and seas.

EMERY POTTLE.



HAD ENOUGH

JACK—Do you believe that marriages are made in heaven?
 BILLY—Not by men who experimented during life.



DOUBLY LEFT

ISABEL—That young man who owns the auto jilted her.
 FLORENCE—That's awful. The poor thing had just bought an automobile coat.



SHE (*in hammock*)—Well, sir, there's such a thing as coming too near.
 HE—Would you rather I went too far?

FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO

By Clinton Scollard

IF any one of Percival Harrison's numerous friends had chanced to meet him in the streets of Jerusalem and had asked him why he had come to Palestine, he would doubtless have replied that he did not know, nor would it have occurred to him that his answer lacked the unsullied kernel of truth. And yet he had never thought of visiting the East until an acquaintance in Paris informed him that Jeannette Hayne and her father were en route thither.

He had been in the "land of many memories" somewhat more than a day and his experience had not been such as to put him in the most amiable frame of mind. He had left France with so much haste that he had scarcely the time, and certainly not the inclination, to inform himself in regard to the customs of the Orient; so his landing at Jaffa and interview with the officials at that port had ruffled his usually unperturbed spirit greatly, when, had he but known it, a judicious use of "backsheesh" would have saved him all discomfort. The ride to Jerusalem, in a conveyance which he characterized as a cross between a buck-board and an antiquated country stage, had further aroused his generally somnolent feeling of contrariety, and the dinner of which he had just partaken, at a hotel not far removed from the Jaffa Gate, had not tended to improve his good nature.

As he stood alone in front of the cracked mirror in his carpetless, bare-walled room, adjusting his cravat before going out into the evening air, he looked at his reflection in the glass and called it names that were neither

complimentary nor endearing. Instead of fishing for tarpon in Florida, or playing golf in Thomasville, he was following a lovely will-o'-the-wisp in this—well, owing to certain early associations which he had always cherished, he would forbear to characterize the country.

He gripped his walking-stick and left the hotel. The month was March and, as he emerged from the courtyard into the street, far away upon his right the fast sinking sun was casting over the land the hyacinthine glory of early Spring. The splendor took hold on Harrison. It swept, on the instant, all dissatisfaction out of his soul. It clothed the sordidness and dirt and uncouthness about him with such a light as he had always dreamed should envelop sacred scenes. It sublimed wall and tower, minaret and dome. Somewhere in Harrison's make-up, under the thick crust of conventionality and matter-of-factness, was a strain of romance, and his sense of beauty was now strongly touched. He began to take back the names he had applied to himself when surveying his features and figure in the glass. There was another hotel within the walls where he possibly might get track of the Haynes, and, even if he did not, perhaps, after all, Palestine had its redeeming points.

It will be seen that Miss Hayne stood before all else in the landscape of his mind. She was the foreground—and a most fair one—while the background was any casual assortment of objects, animate or inanimate. She had, in reality, occupied this position for a considerable length

of time, but Harrison did not come to a full knowledge of it until she sailed away from New York with her father, one dull morning in late Autumn, and left the day vastly more sunless by her going. A month later he, too, shook the rains of the American metropolis from his mackintosh. Before their departure he had known something of the intentions of the Haynes; but fate, that disturber of the best laid plans, brought about encounters with friends and consequent changes of routes of travel, so the young man and young woman continued to pursue divergent paths.

Harrison picked up for a guide a bright-faced Arab boy who was loitering near the hotel entrance, and with him trotting on before, his mien bristling with importance, the American swung down the gentle dip which the post-road makes as it approaches the Jaffa Gate. Above the thoroughfare, on the right, Turkish officers were sipping coffee at small tables in front of a low-roofed café. Along the Bethlehem highway a mule-train, packed with the tents and baggage of a tourist party, was just straggling cityward. Somewhere from within the walls floated the tinkling strains of a zither and the words of a Greek song. Harrison passed the cavass of one of the consulates, gorgeously adorned. A pitiful leper approached him, clinking a solitary coin in a tin cup, and besought alms. There was a babel of tongues, and most of them were strange to him.

As he entered the gate he was conscious of a strange feeling—a sudden quickening of the heart. He had once been a student of history and knew something of the turmoil and riot of passion that, in the name of One whom all Christians hold holy, had of old seethed and surged about these "hills of Zion." That he was treading where the great of the Jews and Romans and Crusaders and Saracens had trod seemed to him the crown of unreality. For a moment the image of Jeannette Hayne was blurred a trifle, but it gradually assumed its normally clear

proportions as he drew near the hotel where he hoped to find trace of her.

The manager greeted him with characteristic obsequiousness. "Mr. Hayne and hees daughtaire?" he said, in response to Harrison's inquiry. "Oh, yase! They stop heer, but I haf to regret that they are thees affairnoon gone with a party to Jericho."

"To Jericho!" echoed Harrison, feeling that he was expected to know the exact locality and distance of this place of familiar name, but being completely at sea.

"Yase, and to the Jordain."

"Ah! And when do you think they will return?"

"Late me see. To-night, Marsaba; to-morrow night, Jericho; anotheir, heer. Yase, that is it."

"Indeed! Then there is a way of going to Jericho in one day?"

"Certainlee! Certainlee!"

Harrison stood in silence, considering an idea that had just taken possession of him.

"Would the gentailman like to make the treep?" asked the manager. "We haf heer to recommend a dragoman most excellent. He spik Ainglaish, Frainch, Germain, Ital——"

"Thanks," said Harrison, "the first will answer perfectly well if I conclude to engage him. Where is he to be found?"

"Theer;" and the manager pointed to a window by which two men stood, conversing. "Demetrius!" he called; whereupon one of the two wheeled about and approached.

He was fashioned like an athlete in every line of his figure, while his features were clearly Greek in type. He wore the boots and spurs of a horseman, trousers of corduroy, a close-fitting jacket and a jaunty, visorless, astrakhan cap.

"A good comrade and a trusty friend!" was Harrison's unspoken comment as he surveyed the dragoman.

"Thees gentailman," said the hotel manager, "he talk of going to Jericho."

"Ah," said Demetrius, with a slight bow and a smile that showed his white teeth, "that is easy, if the gentle-

man is accustomed to horseback riding."

The conversation thus opened between Harrison and Demetrius led shortly to an arrangement that the latter should, for a stated sum, furnish, on the morrow, horses and other necessities for the Jericho trip, an escort being included.

"An escort?" cried Harrison, as Demetrius made mention of this matter at the close of the bargain. "What need is there of an escort?"

"It is largely an affair of form," replied Demetrius, "but the authorities insist, and should anything happen, they could be held responsible."

"Anything happen! What could happen?"

"Was it not when he was making a journey to Jericho that a certain man fell among thieves?"

Harrison laughed.

"Then there are still thieves?" he said. "And perhaps you think there are no longer good Samaritans?"

"Certainly not upon the road to Jericho."

It was a unique cavalcade that, the next morning, quitted the hotel where Harrison was stopping and wound around the walls of Jerusalem, past the Damascus Gate, through the Kedron Valley and along the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. As a fore-runner ambled the escort, an attenuated Bedouin, black as Erebus, swathed from head to knees in the mysterious folds of a single garment of the dull brown hue of earth, an antiquated musket of extraordinary length slung across his back. He rode without a saddle and the lower portion of his legs protruded from his raiment like pieces of rattan. Demetrius and Harrison followed a few paces behind this curious advance guard, while in the rear, gay as a grig in the heart of harvest, a young Arab muleteer now reasoned with the obdurate beast which he bestrode and now burst into a monotonous and seemingly meaningless "*Wallah! wallah! bah! bah!*"

Demetrius delivered a concise and

lucid preachment upon the various Bible scenes which they beheld—squalid Bethany, crouching on its stony hillside; the lonely, leech-ridden "sun-spring" of Joshua, that later came to be known as the Well of the Apostles; the deserted and dilapidated khan perched on the wind-haunted, uninhabitable uplands, giving the parable of the good Samaritan a localization.

But, however much the strangeness, the wildness, the desolation of the region through which he fared impressed Harrison, his thoughts ever flew forward. Somewhere he had read of the beautiful Jericho rose, but this was not the flower he sought in the sacred Jordan vale. There was a girl, the bloom of whose face was more to him than any blossom grown from Beersheba to Dan; the music of whose voice was sweeter than the silver-singing Barada that the Greeks, in days long lapsed, were wont to speak of as the stream of gold. This sentimental traveler and his three attendants descended from the melancholy and arid wilderness into the smiling and luxuriant Jericho plain, while the sun still blazed almost zenith high.

"Now, if the *howadji* is not too weary," said Demetrius, "we can visit the Jordan and then return to Jericho for the night."

"Weary!" echoed Harrison, with a laugh; "I'm good for another four hours, if the horses are. Where do visitors usually tarry?" he inquired, wishing, if possible, to fix the spot where he was likely to catch the first glimpse of Jeannette Hayne.

"Tourists with tents generally camp on the site of the ancient city, a mile or so to the north," said the dragoman, with an indefinite wave of his hand. "We shall have to put up with the inn."

"A mile," thought Harrison. "That's not much. Demetrius, of course, knows the way."

They parted with their pack animal and muleteer at that combination of stone and plaster known as the Jordan Hotel, whither they were to return for shelter, and pressed eastward across

an undulating and partially barren reach of country, where presently they encountered a drove of camels squatting in the shade of a clump of scrubby thorns. Directly before them a line of vivid-green bough-tops cut the landscape. Half the distance to the Jordan had been compassed, so Demetrius had just announced, when Harrison's alert eye fell on some riders who were crossing a low ridge a third of a mile away, on their left. He called the dragoman's attention to them.

"Travelers," the latter remarked, "going to view the site of Gilgal. It is of little interest, or I would have taken you there."

The site of Gilgal of little interest! Most certainly Harrison had never cared a jot about it—but now!

"Those riders," Harrison told himself, "must belong to the party of which Miss Hayne and her father are members."

Gilgal, in that minute, became, of all spots in the world, the one possessing the greatest allurements.

"I suppose we couldn't cut across country and have a look at the place?" he hazarded to Demetrius.

"No, it would not be possible," the dragoman replied. "The gully you noticed some time back makes an ugly dig about midway. However, we can return by that route, if you wish."

Yet when, having viewed the Jordan and reclined for a space beneath the poplars on its banks, they sought out the site where the "twelve stones of Gilgal" are alleged to have been erected, Harrison betrayed what seemed to Demetrius an amazing indifference, considering the earlier interest he had displayed. Very little the Greek dreamed what was passing in the mind of the American. What, forsooth, were the "twelve stones of Gilgal" to this lover? What the tottering arcades above the grotto of John the Baptist? What all history, all legends, all associations, sacred or profane? Three miles distant—nay, a single mile, now that they had turned back to Jericho—was Jeannette Hayne,

and he adored her and he intended to tell her so that night!

Supper was over and Harrison had smoked his cigar while he watched the sun swiftly decline behind the Judean mountains. The talk between Demetrius and himself had swayed from the peculiarities of travelers to the foundation stones of the Temple of Solomon, and it was an apt time, Harrison concluded, to broach the topic foremost in his thoughts.

"I expect some friends of mine are camping over yonder," he said, with the same vague wave of the hand which Demetrius had employed that morning, "and I'd like to walk over and call on them."

"Certainly," replied Demetrius. "It will give me pleasure to show you the way as soon as the moon rises."

Such a magical disk of gold as presently pushed its way above the crests of the peaks of Moab was a revelation to Harrison. It engulfed the sky with a great wave of light, it climbed majestically up the heavens and poised in mid-ether like a paler sun. The two men left the thatched hovels and straggling gardens, and wound between dense copses of thorn. Bulbuls began singing near and far, run responding to run, trill answering trill, quaver echoing quaver. Into the bird-song broke a tuneful water gurgle and they crossed the limpid overflow of the fountain of Elisha. Now their path led through shallows of moonshine and now through quiet pools of shade. An occasional thorn-branch would reach out and make a hasty snatch at leg or arm, but otherwise they swung onward, unimpeded. Demetrius acted as vanguard, while their muleteer tramped behind, still, in an undertone, humming his desert ditty of the morning. It was all fascinating and fantastic and unreal to Harrison, and he began to wonder if, at last, he should actually be brought back to to-day by the smile and voice and look of Jeannette Hayne.

Suddenly, as they were threading a matted thicket, Demetrius stumbled and well-nigh sprawled headlong. Har-

rison, stooping to see what had tripped him, lifted from the path a peeled rod, of the thickness of his wrist, with a crook at the end. When they passed again into moonlight, all three paused to examine it.

"A shepherd's staff," said Demetrius, as he handed it to the muleteer, with whom he exchanged some words in Arabic.

The latter scanned the crook narrowly and then returned it to Harrison, making an abrupt comment to the dragoman as he did so.

"He says it is the staff of a Bedouin from beyond the Jordan," explained Demetrius, as they started on again.

Now dragoman and muleteer preceded Harrison, talking earnestly. Did the finding of the staff portend aught? the American began to wonder. He gripped the grimy wood and swung it at an apple-of-Sodom shrub, crushing several apples to a pulp. It occurred to him that it would make a fine weapon in a scrimmage.

By this time the copse had grown thinner and soon they saw the tents of the tourist party above them on a gentle slope. In the background loomed a black bulk of rock, in the side of which a single light glowed like a yellow star.

"It is the Mount of Temptation," said Demetrius, "and that is a hermit's cell."

As they started to ascend the slope there came a strange burst of music from near the tents, discordant and barbaric, yet having a certain unmistakable rhythm.

"We are just in time to see the Jericho Arabs give their dance," announced Demetrius. "They frequently entertain travelers in that way if there is promise of liberal reward. Let us pass to the rear of the camp and view the performance from higher ground."

Harrison was interested and inwardly excited. The incident of finding the staff vanished from his mind, though he still held the thing itself in his hand. Miss Hayne was there, scarcely a hundred yards away; in a

few moments he would be able to look upon her face, to watch her without her being conscious of his presence, for of course he would not reveal himself until after the curious entertainment was over.

As proposed by Demetrius, they skirted the encampment and paused upon a slight eminence in the rear. The dragoman of the tourist party had spared no pains to make the spectacle a success. Extra tent-poles had been utilized and Chinese lanterns suspended upon a wire between them. The musicians were hidden from view at one side. Cymbals, a reed and a rude drum appeared to be the only instruments. The spectators were seated upon camp-stools in a close semicircle.

The centre of the open space, as the three newcomers took up their position of vantage, was occupied by a number of chanting, swaying figures; in front of them, with eccentric posturing, danced a gigantic Arab, whirling a scimitar.

"He looks fierce, does he not?" remarked Demetrius to Harrison, "yet I know him for a great coward."

But Harrison had no eyes for any of that fantastic band, not even for the central performer with his elaborate flourishes. He did not so much as note that Demetrius had unslung his gun, a rifle of comparatively modern type, and was leaning upon it. At a glance he had picked out the object of his long pilgrimage and upon her and upon the person at her side his gaze was riveted. Miss Hayne's companion was a young man and he was bending toward her in a most devoted manner. On a sudden Harrison's fond dreams and hopes sank as swiftly as a lineman's lead plumped into fathomless water. An instant later, however, up leaped his spirits like a feather tossed by an Autumn gust, for he caught a glimpse of the young man's countenance and it was that of a callow youth, boyish and beardless. All the incense the boy might burn at love's shrine did not affect Harrison's equanimity. The enamoured traveler now fell to regarding

every movement which Miss Hayne made; the little toss of her head when she laughed—how well he knew it!—the graceful motions of her arms, the swaying of her body as she kept time to the swing and beat of the dance. He was not even aware that the men had given place to women, that two lithe forms were treading a sinuous, gliding measure before the dozen raptly attentive tourists. It was Demetrius who broke in on his waking reverie.

"Did you hear that?" the dragoman demanded.

"What?" asked Harrison, annoyed at being disturbed.

"That sound, like a jackal's bark, from the direction of the thorn clump yonder. 'Twas no animal."

From the opposite side of the camp shrilled another cry like the barking of the dog of the desert.

"What does it mean?" demanded Harrison, in apprehension.

"Robber Bedouins from beyond the Jordan, I believe," replied Demetrius. "I half suspected as much when I saw that staff you hold and yet I was loath to say so lest you should be concerned. I still hope I may be mistaken."

"Look!" cried Harrison, suddenly, clutching Demetrius by the arm and pointing toward an opening in the thorn thicket below. "Something is moving on the ground yonder!"

"Come!" exclaimed the dragoman. "We must alarm the encampment!"

They were not quick enough, however, to anticipate the Bedouins, for they had traversed but half the distance between the spot where they had been standing and the tents, when a chorus of yells surged across the spaces of the night, the Jericho dancers, women and men, were swept aside and the camp was overrun with howling figures brandishing guns, scimitars and crooks like the one which Harrison held. In an instant there was frenzied confusion—shrieks, shouts of command or of entreaty, exhortations and an occasional outcry of pain.

"Mind your head!" cried Deme-

trius, and a second later they were in the mêlée.

The Bedouins were bent on plunder and on seizing some of the travelers and holding them for ransom, hence at the outset there was no inclination on their part to do serious injury. The camp attendants of the tourist party—the dragoman, his assistants and the sheik of the Jordan who was acting as escort—were taken by surprise, yet they grasped whatever was available and fought valiantly. The five or six men among the travelers joined, bare-handed, in the struggle and closed with their assailants; so, although the Bedouins had a preponderance in numbers, it grew evident that they were not readily to work their will.

Harrison saw a black-robed form go down before a stroke from Demetrius's gun-stock and, thus encouraged, he launched a blow at a Bedouin, who was menacing him with a curved blade of Damascus. The man's arm fell, his weapon flew in air and he uttered a howl of pain and rage. The lust of fight now grew fierce in Harrison, for he descried two swarthy denizens of the desert striving to drag Miss Hayne out of the press. The young man who had been seated by her side was endeavoring to protect her, but, even as Harrison looked, a blow descended upon his head and he seemed to crumple like a leaf and disappear. Harrison was conscious of an assailant leaping at him, but he dodged and Demetrius engaged this antagonist. Thus left free, he raced around the edge of the struggling mass. As he did so, he heard, in sharp succession, the ringing reports of a revolver. At this, a wave of panic began to run through the attacking marauders. They had not anticipated such resistance; they had not bargained for an encounter with modern fire-arms. Their leader, a renegade Maronite dragoman, shouted the command for withdrawal. On all sides they commenced to melt away and some of the travelers were engulfed

in the receding tide, Miss Hayne among them. Hard after the two miscreants who had her in their grip pressed Harrison. He gained upon them at every stride, and now he lunged viciously at one with his staff. The man moaned and lurched forward. The other released Miss Hayne's arm and grappled with Harrison. They swayed, stumbled and fell. Over and over they rolled on the sharp rocks and among the prickly thorns. Now Harrison had the Bedouin by the throat and now the situation was reversed. At length, as though by a common impulse, both relaxed their hold and sprang to their feet. They faced each other a second; then the son of the desert made a swift plunge for the thorn thicket and was lost to view.

Harrison wheeled about. Thirty feet away was Miss Hayne, regarding him intently. His face was scratched, his hands bruised and torn, his clothing rent in many places; but what cared he? He moved quickly toward the girl, elation in his heart, words of love hanging upon his lips. He could see that she had not yet recognized him, in spite of the fact that he was bare-headed.

"This wasn't exactly what I came here for," he began, "but——"

"Percival! Percival Harrison!" she cried, in amazement.

On her face had flowered a sudden happiness.

"Yes," said Harrison, "it's I—what's left of me."

He drew her to him, unresistingly.

"Do you know why I am here in Jericho?" he demanded.

She smiled at him archly.

"To tell you I love you—I love you!" cried he.

"To think," she replied, still smiling, "that you've had to come all the way to Jericho to tell me that! Now, if you'd only said so in New York——"

"No," he broke in, "I'm glad I didn't! It's sweeter as it is. It's worth no end of trips to Jericho, Bedouins thrown in!"

"Jeannette! Jeannette!" called a voice, in distress and anxiety.

"Yes, father, I'm safe!" replied Miss Hayne. "Are you all right?"

"Yes; no one is seriously hurt," came the answer.

As Harrison and Miss Hayne walked hand in hand toward the tents the former was once more conscious of the song of the bulbuls, and it seemed to him like a *fubilate*.



A WELL-MEANT SUGGESTION

WHEN from your love you part to meet again,
One little tip for your consideration:
Don't say *au revoir*, nor yet *auf wiedersehen*,
Unless you're sure of the pronunciation.

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.



METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING

"WHOSE cloak are you wearing?" asked Curiosity.
"Oh, Love's, as usual," sneered Desire.

SURRENDER

SO hard I strove to crowd you from my heart,
 You who once loved, but love me now no more;
 Yet all the weary night your face would start
 Out of the blackness and the midnight's door,
 And smile—to mock me!—as it did of yore.

Why is it that your name is on my tongue
 When the gray dawn first creeps across the hill?
 Why is it, ere the lark his song has sung,
 Your voice is in my brain and singing still
 The old, old love that taunts my weakened will?

There is no shore that can resist the sea!
 Oh, I have striven to forget, in vain;
 So give me now the olden memory,
 Come, if you will, through distance and bleak rain,
 Come, if you will, although you bring me pain!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



SHE OWED HER ONE

FIRST SOCIETY GIRL—I cannot see myself as others see me, you know.
 SECOND SOCIETY GIRL—Oh, I don't know. You might look at your picture in this morning's paper.



AN OFT-TOLD TALE

BIBBS—That was a remarkable escape of Borebeigh's. It is a wonder he is alive to tell the tale.
 GIBBS—Yes; and such a pity, too!



ARRANGING MATTERS

MAY—One of the young men I'm engaged to is going to get married.
 GRACE—Which one?
 "I haven't decided yet."

LA DAME A L'EVENTAIL

Par Anatole France

TCHOUANG-TSEN, du pays de Soung, était un lettré qui poussait la sagesse jusqu'au détachement de toutes les choses périssables, et comme, en bon Chinois qu'il était, il ne croyait point, d'ailleurs, aux choses éternelles, il ne lui restait pour contenter son âme que la conscience d'échapper aux communes erreurs des hommes qui s'agitent pour acquérir d'inutiles richesses ou de vains honneurs. Mais il faut que cette satisfaction soit profonde, car il fut, après sa mort, proclamé heureux et digne d'envie. Or, pendant les jours que les génies inconnus du monde lui accordèrent de passer sous un ciel vert, parmi des arbustes en fleurs, des saules et des bambous, Tchouang-Tsen avait coutume de se promener en rêvant dans ces contrées où il vivait sans savoir ni comment ni pourquoi. Un matin qu'il errait à l'aventure sur les pentes fleuries de la montagne Nam-Hoa, il se trouva insensiblement au milieu d'un cimetière où les morts reposaient, selon l'usage du pays, sous des monticules de terre battue. A la vue des tombes innombrables qui s'étendaient par delà l'horizon, le lettré médita sur la destinée des hommes.

"Hélas!" se dit-il, "voici le carrefour où aboutissent tous les chemins de la vie. Quand une fois on a pris place dans le séjour des morts, on ne revient plus au jour."

Cette idée n'est point singulière, mais elle résume assez bien la philosophie de Tchouang-Tsen et celle des Chinois. Les Chinois ne connaissent qu'une seule vie, celle où l'on voit au soleil fleurir les pivoines. L'égalité

des humains dans la tombe les console ou les désespère selon qu'ils sont enclins à la sérénité ou à la mélancolie. D'ailleurs, ils ont, pour les distraire, une multitude de dieux verts ou rouges qui, parfois, ressuscitent les morts et exercent la magie amusante. Mais Tchouang-Tsen, qui appartenait à la secte orgueilleuse des philosophes, ne demandait pas de consolation à des dragons de porcelaine. Comme il promenait ainsi sa pensée à travers les tombes, il rencontra soudain une jeune dame qui portait des vêtements de deuil, c'est-à-dire une longue robe blanche d'une étoffe grossière et sans coutures. Assise près d'une tombe, elle agitait un éventail blanc sur la terre encore fraîche du tertre funéraire.

Curieux de connaître les motifs d'une action si étrange, Tchouang-Tsen salua la jeune dame avec politesse et lui dit:

"Oserai-je, madame, vous demander quelle personne est couchée dans ce tombeau, et pourquoi vous vous donnez tant de peine pour éventer la terre qui la recouvre? Je suis philosophe; je recherche les causes, et voilà une cause qui m'échappe."

Le jeune dame continuait à remuer son éventail. Elle rougit, baissa la tête et murmura quelques paroles que le sage n'entendit point. Il renouvela plusieurs fois sa question, mais en vain. La jeune femme ne prenait plus garde à lui et il semblait que son âme eût passé tout entière dans la main qui agitait l'éventail.

Tchouang-Tsen s'éloigna à regret. Bien qu'il connût que tout n'est pas vanité, il était, de son naturel, enclin

à rechercher les mobiles des actions humaines, et particulièrement de celles des femmes; cette petite espèce de créature lui inspirait une curiosité malveillante, mais très vive. Il poursuivait lentement sa promenade en détournant la tête pour voir encore l'éventail qui battait l'air comme l'aile d'un grand papillon, quand, tout à coup, une vieille femme qu'il n'avait point aperçue d'abord lui fit signe de la suivre. Elle l'entraîna dans l'ombre d'un tertre plus élevé que les autres et lui dit:

"Je vous ai entendu faire à ma maîtresse une question à laquelle elle n'a pas répondu. Mais moi je satisferai votre curiosité par un sentiment naturel d'obligeance, et dans l'espoir que vous voudrez bien me donner en retour de quoi acheter aux prêtres un papier magique qui prolongera ma vie."

Tchouang-Tsen tira de sa bourse une pièce de monnaie, et la vieille parla en ces termes:

"Cette dame que vous avez vue sur un tombeau est Madame Lu, veuve d'un lettré nommé Tao, qui mourut, voilà quinze jours, après une longue maladie, et ce tombeau est celui de son mari. Ils s'aimaient tous deux d'un amour tendre. Même en expirant, Monsieur Tao ne pouvait se résoudre à la quitter, et l'idée de la laisser au monde dans la fleur de son âge et de sa beauté lui était tout à fait insupportable. Il s'y résignait, pourtant, car il était d'un caractère très doux et son âme se soumettait volontiers à la nécessité. Pleurant au chevet du lit de Monsieur Tao, qu'elle n'avait point quitté durant sa maladie, Madame Lu attestait les dieux qu'elle ne lui survivrait point, et qu'elle partagerait son cercueil comme elle avait partagé sa couche.

"Mais Monsieur Tao lui dit:

"'Madame, ne jurez point cela.'

"'Du moins,' reprit-elle, 'si je dois vous survivre, si je suis condamnée par les génies à voir encore la lumière du jour quand vous ne la verrez plus,

sachez que je ne consentirai jamais à devenir la femme d'un autre, et que je n'aurai qu'un époux comme je n'ai qu'une âme.'

"Mais Monsieur Tao lui dit:

"'Madame, ne jurez point cela.'

"'Oh! Monsieur Tao, Monsieur Tao! laissez-moi jurer du moins que de cinq ans entiers je ne me marierai.'

"Mais Monsieur Tao lui dit:

"'Madame, ne jurez point cela.

Jurez seulement de garder fidèlement ma mémoire tant que la terre n'aura pas séché sur mon tombeau.'

"Madame Lu en fit un grand serment. Et le bon Monsieur Tao ferma les yeux pour ne plus les rouvrir. Le désespoir de Madame Lu passa tout ce qu'on peut imaginer. Ses yeux étaient dévorés de larmes ardentes. Elle égratignait, avec les petits couteaux de ses ongles, ses joues de porcelaine. Mais tout passe, et le torrent de cette douleur s'écoula. Trois jours après la mort de Monsieur Tao la tristesse de Madame Lu était devenue humaine. Elle apprit qu'un jeune disciple de Monsieur Tao désirait lui témoigner la part qu'il prenait à son deuil. Elle jugea avec raison qu'elle ne pouvait se dispenser de le recevoir. Elle le reçut en soupirant. Ce jeune homme était très élégant et d'une belle figure; il lui parla un peu de Monsieur Tao et beaucoup d'elle-même; il lui dit qu'il sentait bien qu'il l'aimait; elle le lui laissa dire. Il promit de revenir. En l'attendant, Madame Lu, assise auprès du tertre de son mari, où vous l'avez vue, passe tout le jour à sécher la terre de la tombe au souffle de son éventail."

Quand la vieille eut terminé son récit, le sage Tchouang-Tsen songea:

"La jeunesse est courte; l'aiguillon du désir donne des ailes aux jeunes femmes et aux jeunes hommes. Après tout, Madame Lu est une honnête personne qui ne veut pas trahir son serment."

C'est un exemple à proposer aux femmes blanches de l'Europe.



NEWPORT

By Harrison S. Morris

A GRAY old town, with groves of trees
That break up through its balconies
And link the rooves that climb the hill
In leafy shadow, seldom still—
A town of silvered shingles, set
Beside the water, year-long wet
With briny mist or broken spray
Of east-wise eddies blown that way.

To the kind circle of her arms
This village by the water charms
The sea-birds, winged of steam or sail,
That flutter from the flying gale,
Past the gray fortress, past the heaps
Of granite where the roller leaps
Wrecking an impulse come, perchance,
As fashion comes, across from France.

Where once the thrift of Orient trade
An anchorage for the mariner made:
A fireside, friends, the Winter tale
And wit that woke to beaded ale—
There still the seemly dwellings doze
And each green bower breeds the rose;
The brazen knocker yet invites
To curtained quiet, lamplit nights;
And still the elm tree's bough is swayed
Above the lanes for leisure made.

And him behold—the form, the face,
The bodied soul of the bygone place.
Through patch of sunlight, patch of shade,
His form advances on parade—
A daily habit, nicely set
For noonday, if it be not wet.
Straight as a mast and trim of rig,
As once the *Betsy*, whaling brig,
Owner, Erastus Brown—the same—
Old-fashioned, gentle, large of frame,
Slow, with a step that just betrays
The habit of declining days.

THE SMART SET

He climbs the hill beside the hedge,
 Past the old latticed window-ledge,
 Past the low pales that bind the bloom,
 Where bordering box leaves little room,
 Thence to the green, where stands the mill,
 Birth of an era older still.

And there the triple eddies meet
 Of all the steps that trod the street
 Since, with a hoarse Berserker song,
 The builders clomb the ridge along,
 Bringing the dawn across the sea
 That broke through black antiquity:

First, of the Vikings' iron pace,
 Then of the passing mariner race,
 Last, who flutter in gaudier wise,
 The season's silken butterflies—
 Dames that roll by where dandies bow—
 For all the world is idle now.

And, in the arches built of old,
 Great eyes of azure, beards of gold,
 Giants of stature stand and smile—
 For the armor rusts, and the rage is style.



LAUGHABLE

FIRST ANGEL—I suppose the people down on earth think we really exist.
 SECOND ANGEL—I know it. As if we did!



SEEMED WEARY

“HOW tired that soldier looks!” remarked Winebiddle.
 “He has on his fatigue uniform,” explained Bloobumper.



FINDING FAULT WITH HIM

SHE—Do you know what I'd do if you should try to kiss me?
 HE—No; why?
 “Oh, nothing; only you don't seem to have any curiosity.”

AS ARRANGED BY RICHIE

By Louise Winter

THEY fancied that their acting had been perfect; that no one of the house-party suspected they had ever been more than mere acquaintances; and the end of the week, which both had decided at the beginning would be intolerable, was drawing to a close.

Editha announced at dinner that she must leave the next day on the twelve-forty; and as she looked across the table she met—not Archie's cool gray eyes, but the little, twinkling, inquisitive orbs of Richie Long. It was Richie whom Editha feared in the beginning; he had a nose for a mystery and few secrets were safe from his prying; but, though he had been present when she and Archie met for the first time since those dear old days at Cairo, he had not appeared to notice either Archie's start of surprise or Editha's vivid blushes. But he had noticed both and when he went up to his room to dress he was patching together the broken threads of memory. "Let me see, Archie Trevis and Editha Anglesey—I've heard those names coupled. I have it! They were at Cairo last Winter; I remember Maud telling me all the girls envied her, and the men wanted to cut him out. I'll write to Maud to-night and find out why these two meet like comparative strangers."

He despatched a brief note to his sister and three days later received her reply: "Devoted! Well, I should say they were! It was the prettiest romance imaginable and every one expected the announcement of an engagement; then, one day, they scarcely spoke, and the next he went up the Nile and she left for the Riviera with

her aunt. Don't meddle in their affairs, Richie. They were really in love and the quarrel is bound to come right in the end."

Richie was not ill-natured; he did not wish to widen any breach, but he had a habit of taking intense interest in the affairs of other people.

"Rather nice girl, Miss Anglesey," he remarked to Trevis, as the two men lingered in the smoking-room the night Richie received the answer from his sister.

Trevis pulled stolidly at his pipe. "Charming," he said, without enthusiasm.

"You've met before, haven't you? I thought my sister mentioned that you were at Cairo together last Winter," Richie went on, in his most guileless tone.

"If she gave you the information, why question me?" Trevis emptied his pipe, put it in his pocket and went to join the others at ping-pong.

Richie was more successful with Editha. "Trevis is a very decent chap," he ventured, the next morning, as they were on their way to the golf links, "even if he can't master the subtleties of ping-pong."

Editha turned on him quickly. "Mr. Trevis has weightier things with which to occupy his mind."

"Oh, come now, you surely don't credit that bluff of his going into politics, do you?"

"I know that he has studied the political situation thoroughly and he is quite serious in his determination to serve his country."

"Phew! I didn't know you were such chums! Now that I come to think,

though, you were together last Winter, weren't you?" He could not be certain, but he fancied a tiny sigh escaped her lips.

From her warm partisanship, he did not doubt the state of her feelings, and from the change that swept over Trevis's features every time he found himself in Editha's vicinity Richie could not doubt him, either. "The Lord helps those who help themselves, but these two innocents would go on for years, each waiting for the other to speak first. Guess I'll have to take a hand in the matter, much as I dislike to interfere."

When Editha announced that she would leave by the twelve-forty train, Richie had an inspiration. The next morning Trevis received a telegram from his law partner urging his immediate return.

"You can go up on the twelve-forty with Miss Anglesey; she will be glad of company, I'm sure," suggested Trevis's hostess, when he showed her the yellow paper that was to change the current of his affairs.

Trevis made no protest; he was sure Editha must realize that he could not refuse to travel with her; and, in spite of his self-control, his pulses leaped at the thought of three hours spent in the close proximity of a drawing-room car.

As it was near the luncheon hour, none of their fellow guests accompanied them to the station and their hostess bade them good-bye from the porch. During the short drive neither of them spoke, but Editha was very pale and her pretty mouth trembled ominously. Trevis thought she had grown thinner since last Winter.

The train was waiting as they drove up, and he helped her into the car, while the footman arranged their hand-luggage. But just as they were about to start Richie dashed in, bearing a huge bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley and white roses, tied with an enormous bow of white ribbon. "Here, you forgot this!" he cried, thrusting it into Editha's hands. "Good luck to you!" Then he threw a paper bag at Trevis, and, before the latter recovered from

the shock of being showered with rice, Richie was gone, the train had started, and the half-dozen other passengers were smiling amusedly.

Editha's face turned from white to scarlet and her eyes smarted with unshed tears.

The porter came up to brush away the tell-tale rice. "Wish you much happiness, missus; wish you much happiness, sah," he said, his face beaming at the prospect of a good-sized tip.

"Here, take this, and for heaven's sake keep quiet!" cried Trevis, angrily. Then he turned to Editha. "Brace up, Editha, that's a dear girl. If I could get my hands on that villain I'd choke him!"

"Then you didn't know of this?" she began.

"Surely, you couldn't think that!" he interrupted. "At least, give me credit for a sense of decency. You must know there never was, there never will be any other girl in the world for me, Editha, and, no matter how much you dislike me now, you will be just enough to realize that I never could stoop to such a shabby trick!"

But Editha was too incensed to be just. "Won't you go away and smoke? This is really more than I can bear," she said, harshly.

Trevis turned abruptly and left her, and for the next hour Editha sat facing the window, but seeing nothing of the country through which they passed. Her thoughts were in Cairo. They had met at Shepheard's Hotel, at a dinner given by Mrs. Mason Bey, and he had been her *vis-à-vis*. Afterward they had strolled out into the gardens and become friends.

They passed their days in sight-seeing and their evenings in dreaming under an Egyptian sky, and scarcely a fortnight had elapsed before he spoke of his love and learned of hers in return. Oh, the bliss of those first few days! Then came the night of their quarrel. She heard that he was going to a dance in the native quarter with some of his friends and, in a mo-

ment of jealousy, she told him that if he went it would mean the end of everything between them. When it was too late for forgiveness, he told her that he had had no intention of going, but had resented her imperious manner. Had she pleaded he would have explained, but, as she commanded, he refused to be dictated to, and he determined to go to the dance to show his independence. When they met in the morning he recalled her words of the previous night and asked if she wished to abide by them. Her pride refused to let her yield and they parted, not to meet again until fate brought them under the same roof with Richie Long.

At the first stop the porter came through the car waving a telegram. "Foh Mistah Archibald Trevis!" he called. Editha looked around, blushed and then beckoned.

"He's in the smoking-room," she said, pretending not to notice the smiles of the woman across the aisle.

"Very well, missus; I'll fetch it to yo' husband at once." And he disappeared through the passageway.

Editha dropped her eyes, and they rested on the bouquet that Richie had forced on her. The humorous side of the incident appealed to her and she smiled, as she stooped and raised the flowers to her hot cheeks. She buried her face in their fragrance for a moment, then tossed them deliberately into Trevis's chair.

The train sped on; she knew he would not return until they neared New York and she began to wish for him. Of course, Richie's act had been unpardonable, but she and Trevis might have been on their wedding journey by this time if she hadn't been such a little fool. Suddenly there was a violent jar, a sound of crashing wood, of breaking glass, and then Editha knew no more until she opened her eyes and found herself out in the open air, in Trevis's arms.

"Thank God, you are not dead! Editha, my darling!" The words seemed to come from a distance, but close at hand was Trevis, his face

bending over hers, his eyes gazing into hers, and Editha gave a little sigh of content. She felt no pain, only a strange sinking into space.

"I think I must be dying, but I don't mind if you'll only kiss me once more," she whispered, growing bold in the supreme moment.

Archie's lips touched hers and brought not death, but life.

"You can't be much hurt," came again that far-off voice; "our car wasn't wrecked; you were only thrown out of your seat."

"What happened?" Her brain was clearing.

"We crashed into a freight train."

"Many hurt?" She dared not say killed.

Trevis nodded. "A few."

"Help me up, Archie; I must see what I can do." But she was too weak to stand alone. "Leave me; you go, dear; we mustn't forget those who have been less fortunate than ourselves."

In the moment of their peril all was forgotten but their love, and this neither one of them tried to hide. Trevis strained her to his breast, then left her propped up against some cushions, while he went forward to ascertain the amount of damage that had been done.

It was found to be less than at first anticipated; there were no deaths and, with the exception of the engineer, no one seriously injured. News of the wreck was flashed ahead and, shortly after, a relief train steamed up. Trevis went back to Editha.

"We can go on now, dearest; the injured are being cared for. I sent a telegram to reassure your people; I was afraid the tidings might reach them before we did," he said, lifting her to her feet.

"How thoughtful you are, Archie, I must confess I hadn't remembered my aunt; she's not very affectionate, you know." Leaning on his arm, Editha made her way slowly to the new train.

He put a pillow at the back of her head and then sat down opposite,

smiling. As the train started he drew the second telegram from his pocket and handed it to her.

Hope things have been explained satisfactorily. No need to hurry back to New York. First telegram a fake.

RICHIE.

Editha colored as she read. "After all, he meant well," she said.

Trevis's hand stole out and touched hers.

"If things had gone well, Editha, we might have been on our wedding journey by this time," he ventured.

"I was thinking of that."

"Then why delay any longer? Your aunt gave her consent then, she

wouldn't withhold it now, and I have no one to consult. Will you, Editha?"

"'Xcuse me, sah, but I knowed the lady wouldn't like to lose dis, so I rescued it, sah, hoping de rest ob yo' bridal tour will be free from accidents, sah; thank yo', sah, thank yo' kindly, sah."

Trevis took the bouquet, with its bruised lilies and roses, from the grinning darkey and laid it on Editha's lap.

"You are quite right, porter; the lady wouldn't have lost this for worlds," he said. Then he looked into Editha's eyes and they both laughed out of sheer gladness of heart.



THE MISTAKEN TOAD

A SMALL toad woke, one morn in Spring,
Brushed back his hair and tried to sing.

He felt the world was all his own,
And swelled and swelled in flesh and bone.

Though his conceit was purely vain,
The fault arose from his small brain,

Which only grasped part of the plan
By which is ruled Immortal Man.

It chanced a band played loud that day;
A coach and four dashed on its way;

A donkey brayed; a train rushed by;
A cannon boomed; a hound gave cry;

The thunder rolled; the lightning flashed;
The sun withdrew from view, abashed.

The toad sprang up and gave a shout:
"Oh, what a time! 'cause I've come out!"

I. JAY POTTER.



THEY ALL SAY THAT

SIMMONS—I'll never marry a widow if I can help it.
KIMMONS—I never heard of a man who could.

AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT

By Felix Noël

“AWFUL lot of people here to-day,” he remarked, tentatively.

“Crowds!” she replied, absently, her thoughts a hundred miles, at least, away from her companion.

And they relapsed into silence; he ransacking his brains to find something more to say and finding such ransacking utterly unproductive of any appreciable result; she absorbed in equally unprofitable meditation.

They had been engaged for exactly fifteen minutes and already several of these embarrassing pauses had taken place. Teddy, Lord Tankerford, with half a dozen country houses, a castle in Scotland and a great place in town, rubbed his nose reflectively with his stick and inspected his boots. Lady Gwendoline Massington, without a shilling to call her own, in a bewildering Paquin gown—described in the society papers as “a dream”—and a thirty-guinea picture hat—both articles of dress unpaid for, as, indeed, was every other article of her attire, down to the exquisite little shoes on her exquisite little feet—looked, with her dark brows drawn together into a frown, across the inclosure at Ranelagh at another couple, who seemed to be much more efficiently furnished with matter for conversation than were herself and her companion.

Teddy, glancing furtively at her face, followed the direction of her gaze and laughed.

“Those are the new people, Guffins or Gubbins, or something like that. No end of money! Barton’s making the running pretty strongly,” he said, with an attempt at a tone of easy confidence.

Lady Gwendoline’s beautiful eyes were turned on him coldly.

“I beg your pardon?” she said, with freezing politeness.

“I meant—I thought—” stammered Teddy; “well, you know, everybody says that there will be an engagement there very shortly.”

No reply.

“People will talk,” pursued the unhappy young man, unable, after the manner of his kind, to let the subject rest.

“They *will*!” responded his betrothed, with an emphasis that effectually withered up Teddy’s remaining flowers of speech and reduced him to silence.

He sat reflecting dismally on the extraordinary fact that when with Mademoiselle Antoinette de Bourbon—*née* Liza Higgins—of the “Friv,” or “Stella the Starbeam,” an attractive young person, who shed her radiance on an admiring audience in another equally famous place of intellectual entertainment—he had always plenty to say; and, “by George! said some pretty smart things, too!” he remarked to himself, recalling the peals of merriment, accompanied by champagne refreshment, with which his witticisms were greeted. Yet here, sitting beside the woman who had just consented to become his wife, he felt himself absolutely tongue-tied.

He glanced at her again. She met his eyes and shivered slightly. “Are you cold?” he asked, brightening up at the fact that here was an opportunity for making a remark which was absolutely inoffensive in character.

“Just a little,” she answered, rising and drawing about her shoulders one

of those chiffony, feathery, fluffy white things in which the soul of woman seems to delight; probably because they are ruinously expensive and collapse into worthless fragments of limp wretchedness at the merest apology for a shower.

"Mother is coming this way," she said, as Teddy moved chairs out of the way of the Paquin skirts; "she is looking for us."

Teddy was seized with an accession of nervousness. "You don't think that Lady Becton will object, I hope?" he asked, anxiously.

His fiancée looked at him with a certain commiseration in her eyes. "Good heavens! To think that the idiot never guesses that she went away and left us on purpose to give him an opportunity of speaking!" she said to herself, looking with contemptuous amazement at the six-feet-two of obtuse male humanity beside her. "No, I do not think that she will," she answered, briefly; and Teddy drew a breath of relief.

"You'll let me call you Gwendoline now, won't you?" he asked, a little timidly, wondering to himself whether all engaged maidens were as cold as this stately maiden.

"I suppose I must," she replied, reluctantly; then, the ungraciousness of her words striking her with remorse, she smiled dazzlingly into Teddy's appealing countenance, transporting him into the seventh heaven of delight forthwith, and added, "but at first it will seem very strange."

"Oh, you will soon get used to it, you know!" exclaimed Teddy, his head in a whirl with the intoxication of his good fortune; "and—" hastily, for the countess and party were rapidly approaching them—"you'll—you'll call me Teddy, won't you?"

"I'll try," said his beloved, doubtfully; and with that concession Teddy was fain to rest content.

The man who, according to Teddy, was "making the running" marked the departure of the two on the other side of the inclosure. His eyes fol-

lowed the pair as they strolled along together, Gwendoline's beautiful head carried with a little more stateliness than usual, her tall figure conspicuous in its white draperies among the multi-colored throng; Teddy, a good-looking specimen of well-groomed young manhood, in devoted attendance, with already that slight air of proprietorship which the engaged Briton always thinks it incumbent upon himself to affect.

The man, who for three seasons had amused himself by secretly making passionate love to the girl, whose heart he had held in his hand only to torture and wound, and who, when the chance of making a rich marriage fell in his way, had avoided the unpleasantness of explanations by showing gradually increasing indifference and making prolonged absences—this man laughed a little sardonically as he looked after the pair.

The girl beside him, a little, fluffy-haired, pink-and-white creature, with a hat with too many roses on it and a gown with too many frills on it and too many diamonds stuck about her, looked at him inquiringly.

"I was laughing," he said, explanatorily, "at Tankerford over there. It is something new to see him dancing attendance on a lady. Music-hall artistes are more in his line."

"Tankerford?" she repeated; "oh, yes, I know! Mother," to a slumbering bundle of satin very much over-trimmed with lace, who was nodding beside her under a gorgeous parasol, "that's Lord Tankerford over there with the pretty lady in white!"

"Where?" ejaculated the mother, struggling into an upright position and looking with intense interest at the back of the unconscious Teddy's coat. "Really! so that's Lord Tankerford, is it? They do say that he's the richest young man in all England! Mr. Barton, you know all these people, is that true?"

"Quite true, I believe," replied Gerald Barton, "and—so his friends say, and I believe they are right in saying it—the greatest fool!"

II

THE Massington-Tankerford wedding went off with the customary display of millinery; the usual presents from friends and relatives who wailed in secret over the outlay caused thereby; the usual expressions of gratitude from the recipients of their bounty, who found themselves the happy possessors of things which they did not wish, sent to them by people for whom they did not care; and, finally, the usual outbursts of ecstatic description of the ceremony by the ladies' journals, wherein the fair and ungrammatical describers lost themselves in labyrinths of distracted adjectives and misplaced moods and tenses.

And Lord and Lady Tankerford, each reduced to the last extremity of boredom by the ceremony and its attendant trials, went off to Dover, en route for Paris.

They stayed away for a whole year, wandering about from one place of interest to another; and Gwendoline, who, on her marriage day had meditated an over-dose of chloral, found herself, to her surprise, taking a fair interest in her dinners and able to enjoy life, if not to the full—love being omitted from it—yet with the serenity which accompanies the possession of a well-filled purse—Teddy's settlements were magnificent—perfect health and a background of only twenty birthdays.

She also found herself tolerably well able to put up with Teddy; for that young man, sublimely contented, to all appearance, with his lot and having a deeply rooted conviction of his hopeless inferiority to the radiant being who condescended to wear the Tankerford sapphires, and shed lustre on the Tankerford name, had a talent for effacing himself that positively amounted to genius. He was always in attendance when Gwendoline desired his presence and seemed to drop out of existence on the many occasions when she would have found his society a nuisance.

So the two strolled through Europe

together, and, if the roses of rapture found no place in their matrimonial garden, there was also a notable absence of nettles and briars.

Meanwhile, Gerald Barton's love-affair prospered but badly; indeed, to that gentleman's considerable chagrin, it could not be said to prosper at all; for two London seasons had acquainted Miss Matilda Gubbins with the fact that an accent like an industrious saw and a mother who, when not employed in the assimilation of food, is slumbering audibly in the nearest comfortable chair are not insurmountable barriers to social success when accompanied by an unusually substantial bank account.

The fluffy light hair under the over-trimmed hats covered a small cranium by no means unprovided with brains, and Miss Gubbins—only child and heiress of Enoch Gubbins, who, after making a fortune in pickles, had presumably betaken himself to the bosom of Abraham—inherited a goodly share of her father's acuteness, together with his wealth.

Consequently, weighing Mr. Gerald Barton, with his brilliant conversational powers, his handsome face and distinguished manners, in the balance against certain little private ideals of her own, she found him considerably lighter than vanity; and when that gentleman—with a due sense of the sacrifice that he was making—laid himself and his accomplishments metaphorically at her clumsy little feet, he received, to his unspeakable surprise, a decided refusal.

"You see," said Matilda, putting the tips of her pudgy little bediamonded fingers together and looking thoughtfully at her rejected suitor as they sat on the terrace at the gorgeous Gubbins place by the river, "it's not your want of a title, Mr. Barton, nor yet your want of money that makes me decline your offer."

"You object to me personally, then, I suppose?" said Gerald, trying to speak lightly, but feeling considerable mortification.

"Well," said the girl, earnestly, "I think I do. Getting married seems to

me to be rather like buying gowns, you know. This kind of flimsy thing—"touching her light Summer draperies as she spoke—"is all very well to put on now and then in fine weather; but for every-day hard wear one wants something more lasting, you understand."

"And you think," said her suitor, with a short laugh, "that my affection for you is destitute of that desirable quality?"

"Well, yes, I do," answered the girl. "Look at mother, there. Father was as fond of her when he died as he was when she was a girl like I am. When I get to be like she is now I want my husband to be just as fond of me, and perhaps fonder, than he is on the day when I marry him; and I don't think your liking for me is of that kind, Mr. Barton—I don't, really."

Gerald Barton glanced toward the spot on the terrace where the amorphous Mrs. Gubbins slumbered heavily in a garden-chair; the excellent woman's bonnet was awry and her mouth was widely open. She was not an attractive spectacle.

Gerald Barton rose to go. "Then we must say good-bye," he said, "as you will not credit me with the power of emulating the late Mr. Gubbins's conjugal fidelity."

"Good-bye," returned Matilda, "and—I don't wish to seem to say anything unkind—but I think it had better be a *real* good-bye, don't you know."

And so Gerald Barton received his dismissal.

"Haven't seen you at the Pickle Shop lately," remarked, with delicate wit, the Honorable Charles Winthrop, commonly known as "Chatty" and credited with an unlimited capacity for retailing, with variations and additions, the latest thing in scandal; "grand affair there last night! Mamma Gubbins in diamonds galore! No end of notabilities there! Surprised not to see you!"

Gerald mumbled something vague in reply.

"The Tankerfords are coming back,

I hear. Lovely woman, Lady Tank! Old sweetheart of yours, wasn't she, my boy? How she married that fool Tankerford passes my comprehension. Not a word to say for himself!"

And he went off, chuckling inanely.

The Tankerfords came back, the great town house was thrown open, and Gerald Barton became one of the most frequent guests.

He found Gwendoline even lovelier than of yore; a little statelier, perhaps; a great deal more reserved in manner toward himself, certainly; but by degrees the ice thawed a little, and Gerald slipped back into the old position of friendship which he had held in the days of his first acquaintance with her, before words of love had passed between them. With the renewed intercourse the old fancy, which he had imagined long ago dead, revived with tenfold ardor and became a passion, and Gerald Barton found himself genuinely in love for the first time in his life.

With the return to London something of a change in the Tankerford mode of life had necessarily been made, and the husband and wife were less constantly together, being no longer thrown to a considerable extent entirely upon each other's society; but Teddy, to the surprise of his friends, returned not to the haunts of his bachelor days; and Mesdemoiselles Antoinette, Stella and Co. looked for him in vain. True, when the old mother of the "Starbeam"—an ancient rag-bag with a purple countenance, who continually presented herself in a state of inebriety at the stage-door and was as continually being ejected therefrom, to the great delight of the juvenile votaries of the drama—when this venerable lady succumbed to a combination of gin and bronchitis it was Teddy who responded liberally to the daughter's appeal; and the decent funeral and the doctors' bills and a goodly number of other little matters were paid for out of Teddy's pocket; a fact which, by some occult means, coming to Chatty Winthrop's ears, sent that

gentleman delightedly forth to make what mischief he could by imparting the intelligence to Teddy's wife.

For the Tankerford ménage was something of a puzzle to the Tankerford surroundings, their friends looking forward with amiable expectation to the time when one or the other of the strangely assorted pair should grow restive under the yoke and give the polite world food for entertainment by presenting it with a full-blown scandal. So Chatty, with the laudable intention of contributing his mite toward the overthrow of the matrimonial coach, betook himself, with his news, to Lady Tankerford.

"Kind-hearted fellow, Tankerford! Most kind-hearted," he said, reflectively, sitting opposite Gwendoline in her pretty drawing-room and blinking at her with his watery blue eyes; "gets taken in sometimes, I expect, no doubt; but we all do that."

"I am glad that you have so good an opinion of him," absently replied Gwendoline, who regarded Chatty as a harmless little bore and paid, as a rule, small attention to his remarks.

"Paid all the funeral expenses for that poor girl's mother—girl he used to know in his bachelor days, you know; doctors and nurses and goodness knows what!" went on Chatty, watching her narrowly.

Lady Tankerford turned her beautiful eyes on him inquiringly.

"You didn't know about her, eh? Well, perhaps I ought not to have mentioned it to you. We bachelors are not so particular in the choice of our acquaintances as staid old married men have to be;" and Chatty giggled, delightedly. But his mirth was suddenly cut short by the advent of Teddy.

"I was just being entertained by an encomium on your goodness," said Lady Tankerford, languidly; "Mr. Winthrop has been quite enthusiastic on the subject of your benevolent actions."

"Oh—ah—my dear fellow," said Chatty, wishing himself well out of it; "I was merely alluding to—to——"

"To the help we gave to that poor

circus-riding or dancing girl, you remember," went on Gwendoline, composedly; "it really was a very sad case, Mr. Winthrop; and the dreadful old mother's death must have been a great relief to the poor girl, though she cried most bitterly over her, poor thing!"

"You *saw* her?" asked Chatty, in the blankest amazement.

"Yes," replied Teddy, with a steady look into the Honorable Charles Winthrop's face, which made that worthy feel unaccountably uncomfortable; "Lady Tankerford was good enough to allow me to take her to see the poor girl; we did no more for her than any one else would have done. Have you been to hear this new fiddler of whom everybody is talking, Winthrop?"

It was a decidedly crestfallen Chatty who shortly took his leave; and as the door closed after his retreating figure Lady Tankerford laughed softly to herself.

Teddy, Lord Tankerford, did not laugh, however. He stood in the balcony watching the discomfited Chatty get into his hansom, then went out and summoned his man.

"Just give instructions, Peters," he said, quietly, "that in future neither Lady Tankerford nor myself is at home to Mr. Charles Winthrop."

Then he went back and told his wife what he had done.

III

TIME went on, and by degrees a worried expression marred the dark beauty of Gwendoline's face and a hunted look came into her eyes. People began to notice that at all the Tankerford entertainments, and they were many, Gerald Barton was invariably present, hovering about his hostess like a baleful shadow and making but the most transparent fiction of a pretense to hide his devotion.

The proverbial onlookers, who see the most of a great many games and imagine that they see the most of a great many which are non-existent, were un-

able, however, to detect in Lady Tankerford's dignified composure of manner any appreciative recognition of the constantly offered homage, and had, therefore to content themselves with expressive shrugs and glances, and the utterance of darkly prophetic hints of coming misfortune to the house of Tankerford in the person of its gracious châtelaine.

As for Teddy, he went on his way in his usual fashion, cheery and good-tempered as ever; and though, as his friends observed, "Barton made love to his wife under that fool Tankerford's very nose!" the said Tankerford, to all outward seeming, was sublimely unconscious of it.

He was with his wife rather more than usual, as it chanced just then, and it might be that Gwendoline was sensible of some unacknowledged feeling of security in his presence, for her face lost the faint lines of care and the light in her eyes was calm and serene when he was one of the party, which, small or large, and whatever its object might be, always included Gerald Barton in its number. About this time, too, Teddy actually developed a taste for the opera, to the unspeakable astonishment of all who knew him, and might be seen effacing himself in the back of the Tankerford box, acting as an unobtrusive sable background to his wife's laces and diamonds.

As the season drew toward its close the hunted look in Gwendoline's eyes grew more apparent, for Gerald Barton was becoming desperate with the repulses, silent or spoken, which he constantly received, and the girl—for she was little more—felt like some helpless woodland creature around whom the cruel hunter's net is slowly, surely closing.

If there was anything that the owner of the great Tankerford property disliked it was the inspection of the accounts relating thereto, and the bland and courteous gentleman who—as his forebears had for generations done—managed the Tankerford estates found it necessary to exercise the wisdom

of half a dozen serpents combined, in order to circumvent Teddy's ingenious schemes for escape whenever a lengthy business interview was necessary.

Out of one of these interviews came Teddy, muddled in mind and wearied in body, one hot morning at the beginning of July, and, betaking himself to a little room opening from one of the drawing-rooms, he stretched his long legs out on one of the couches and gave a sigh as he thought of Alpine snows, Scotch lakes and moors, iced sherbet, and anything or anywhere but London, its stifling heat and odor of mingled dust and stables.

Lying there with the soft laces of the curtains gently moving in the hot air and the flowers in the balcony just visible in the darkened room, Teddy's meditations became, by degrees, slightly mixed, until presently he was recalled from a scene wherein he, in pajamas and a silk hat, was holding a lengthy and irate argument with the commander-in-chief on the propriety of admitting bull-terriers into the House of Commons, to a knowledge that some one was speaking in the adjoining room, only separated by curtains from the one in which he had taken refuge.

It was his wife's voice, much agitated and broken, that first struck on his ear; but the next instant a man spoke, and Teddy recognized the tones of Gerald Barton.

"That you are unhappy in your marriage is an evident fact, however much you may try to conceal it, however much you may, as you have just done, deny it," he said, in low, suppressed tones. "Why should this continue, Gwendoline? Why——?"

She interrupted him, speaking in a voice of great anger.

"I have already told you more than once that I will not allow you to address me in this manner," she said, indignantly.

"Why should I not call you by the name I love best?" he exclaimed, passionately. "You are the one woman in the world to me! Come to me, Gwendoline! I tell you that I worship the

very ground your foot touches. I envy the beggar into whose hand you drop an alms. Why should you throw yourself away upon a blind fool who is unable to appreciate you?—an oaf with whom you have not an idea in common! Why——?”

“I beg your pardon,” interrupted Teddy, blandly, appearing between the parted curtains, his fair hair standing on end from its recent contact with the cushions. He marked, as he came forward, the flash of relief in his wife’s face and her involuntary movement toward him. “I beg your pardon, Barton, but there you are slightly mistaken. Whatever dissimilarity of tastes and ideas there may be between Lady Tankerford and myself, there is at least one opinion which we share in common. It is, that we prefer to discuss our domestic peculiarities without the assistance of a third person, even though that third person should be a friend so long known and so implicitly trusted as yourself. I believe I express Lady Tankerford’s feelings as correctly as I do my own.”

He turned courteously toward his wife as he spoke.

“Most certainly you do,” said Gwendoline, with emphasis.

Teddy opened the door, with a significant gesture.

Almost speechless with rage, Gerald Barton made a violent effort to control himself. He turned to Gwendoline.

“Lady Tankerford,” he began, ignoring the politely waiting Teddy, “will you allow me to be ordered out of your presence in this manner? Do our years of friendship count for nothing in your estimation?”

Gwendoline turned from him, contemptuously.

He hesitated for an instant and then, without bestowing a glance on Teddy standing quietly at the door, he went out.

“One moment,” said the master of the house, following him quickly. While speaking he opened the door of an adjoining room and motioned to the other to enter.

“There is nothing to be gained by a

discussion between us,” said Gerald Barton, defiantly; “let me pass, sir!”

“Not yet,” answered Teddy, as, with a twist of his hand in the other’s collar, he swung him into the room. “Do you think, you brute, that I have been blind to your behavior during these past months? Do you think that all the insults you have dared to offer to the lady who does me the honor to bear my name are to pass unpunished? You see this whip? I keep it for my dogs! You shall taste it, cur that you are; and then you may go and tell your friends that Teddy Tankerford is not quite such a fool as they and you have thought him to be!”

And he struck him across the face.

Five minutes later Gerald Barton, with great wheals standing out in crimson bars across his livid countenance, made his way down the wide staircase; and Teddy, Lord Tankerford, a little out of breath but otherwise serene as usual, went in search of his wife.

He found her sitting, white and agitated, in the room where he had left her. She looked up at him as he approached. Teddy sat down at a little distance from her, and she waited, half apprehensive of she knew not what, for him to speak.

“I must apologize to you for overhearing what was intended for your ears alone, Gwendoline,” he said, at last, quietly; “but——”

She interrupted him hastily. “I am glad that you did hear,” she said; “glad that you were there to save me from further insult.”

Teddy bowed gravely. “I know,” he went on, and the unconscious sadness in his voice struck upon the heart of his hearer with a strange pang, “that I am altogether an ignorant, un-intellectual kind of fellow, with nothing to recommend me to a woman like you.”

She made a little gesture of protest.

“Oh, yes, but I am,” he continued; “I don’t disguise it to myself. But I have tried to keep out of your way as

much as possible, tried to give you all the liberty that I could. Still, I must acknowledge that in one respect I have been a fool, as that fellow called me just now. I was an abject fool, especially when I supposed, as I did at first, that a brilliant, beautiful creature like you could ever be brought to care a little for a commonplace fellow like myself."

He paused, looking down at the knuckles of one hand, which were cut and bleeding slightly.

Lady Tankerford made no reply.

"However," went on Teddy, rising, "remember this, Gwendoline: no matter how great a fool other people—or even you yourself—may think me, I shall always be near you when you need me, and as long as I live no man breathing shall dare to offer you the shadow of an insult and go unpunished for it."

He rose as he spoke and went toward the door. Gwendoline rose also.

"Teddy!" she cried, with a queer little choke in her voice.

Teddy turned and stood still in astonishment. Was this sweet-faced, tender woman, with the outstretched hands, the tearful, beseeching eyes, the stately, undemonstrative lady whom

he had hitherto called his wife? He stood irresolute.

"Teddy," she said again, and came toward him, laying her white hands on his shoulders and putting her fair, tear-stained face down on his breast, "oh, Teddy! I must really believe that you are indeed a fool, a very great fool, if you do not at last understand that I love you—and have loved you for ever so long, with all my heart!"

The other day, Chatty Winthrop, looking about for something to put into his letter to Gerald Barton, resident for some time past in an out-of-the-way little village in the wilds of Yorkshire, hit upon the Tankerford ménage as a likely subject to interest the absentee, especially as he, Chatty, had a shrewd guess as to the cause of Gerald's abrupt departure from his customary haunts. And so the little busybody wrote as follows:

It is really astonishing, really marvelous how well the Tankerfords get on together. The husband and wife are pretty nearly inseparable! I don't see much of them—they are a shade too humdrum for me—but Lady Tank is lovelier than ever, and as for Tankerford! the fellow has come out in a way that is simply astounding. I do not really believe that he was ever half as much of a fool as we used to think him!



TO A MODERN MAID

FASHIONS change as change the seasons, come and go;
 And the frock that grandma danced in, long ago,
 Scarce would suit your modern fancy, I'm afraid,
 Though grandfather swore 'twas peerless—like the maid.
 Grandmamma, whose flaxen ringlets were so fair,
 No doubt mocked the gay marquise's powdered hair;
 But the fine, brocaded gallants, filled with lace,
 Wrote neat poulets and concetti on her grace.
 The marquise thought Trojan Helen *démodée*,
 Vowed her peplum had been better *retroussé*.
 Fashions change as change the seasons, come and go;
 Dead are Jane, Clorise and Helen, long ago,
 And their costumes seem outlandish nowadays;
 But the things that made men love them last always.
 All their youth and wit and beauty, you repeat,
 And I find all their perfections in you, sweet.

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.

COURTSHIP

By Edith Harman Brown

MRS. COURTENAY ALLEN

MISS ALLEN

AT HOME

TUESDAY, DECEMBER THIRD

FROM FOUR UNTIL SEVEN

Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay Allen request the pleasure of Mr. Alexander Robbin's company at dinner on Wednesday, December eleventh, at eight o'clock.

Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay Allen request the pleasure of Mr. Alexander Robbin's company on Thursday evening, January ninth, at nine o'clock.

MY DEAR MR. ROBBINS:

Will you dine with us quite informally on Tuesday, February first, at half-past seven?

Yours sincerely,

AMELIA LIVINGSTON ALLEN.

Tuesday, January fourteenth.

MY DEAR MR. ROBBINS:

We have tickets for the theatre a week from to-morrow night, and hope you will join us.

Don't bother to answer; just stop in to tea on your way up-town and let me know.

Yours sincerely,

AMELIA L. ALLEN.

Wednesday, January twenty-ninth.

MY DEAR MR. ROBBINS:

With all your family out of town you must be quite lonely. Please

remember that you will be welcome at dinner here any evening at half-past seven.

Yours cordially,

A. L. ALLEN.

Monday, February tenth.

MY DEAR MR. ROBBINS:

Mamma wishes me to write and ask what Sunday you are going to give us down here.

We are to be here for two weeks longer, and the riding is perfect. I hope you will be able to come.

Yours very sincerely,

ETHEL LIVINGSTON ALLEN.

LAKEWOOD,

Wednesday, April second.

DEAR MR. ROBBINS:

The roses were beauties. Thank you so much. All the nice men seem to have left when you went, and I shall be glad to get home next week.

Yours sincerely,

ETHEL L. ALLEN.

LAKEWOOD,

Thursday, April tenth.

DEAREST ALEC:

I looked at my ring for an hour last night and thought of you. It is a beauty—like the giver—but I only wish I had him as near to me! Do hurry back to me. I want to show you the letters of congratulation. No one can say enough good about you. Isn't it queer that the people who are made for one another must come together, eventually, in spite of all obstacles?

Yours devotedly,

ETHEL.

NORTHEAST HARBOR, MAINE,

Tuesday, July eighth.

A SUMMER ROMANCE

OH, it came to pass that Timothy Grass
 Loved winsome Mistress Clover;
 He gazed and sighed, and his fate he tried
 Over and over and over.
 But the more he pled she tossed her head,
 Saucy and quite flirtatious,
 And romped with the breeze and the bumble-bees
 In a style, the minx, audacious.

Still his passion grew, till the fields all knew,
 As well as the larks o'er-poising.
 Sang the bobolink: "Say, what do you think?"
 Afar the gossip noising.
 Yet his heart held stout amid gibe and pout,
 And true as the stars above him;
 And one eve, through the moth, she gave her troth—
 "Tell Timothy I—I love him!"

How zephyr and bird spread wide the word!
 How crickets piped their praises!
 Till, a month scarce gone, they were wed at dawn
 In front of a throng of daisies.
 And the groom, by the aid of the reaper's blade,
 Sir Timothy *Hay* was knighted,
 While Clover *Hay* is the charming way
 Her name must now be cited.

EDWIN L. SABIN.



NATURAL INQUISITIVENESS

SHE—The man Miss Homeleigh married was blind in one eye.
 HE—Indeed! What was the matter with the other one?



A DESIRABLE ACQUAINTANCE

BESSIE—I dearly love Flora—she knows so many secrets!
 LENA—Yes, and they are all worth repeating.

A STRANGE OBSESSION

By Leon Mead

WHETHER Bronson Insull first derived his impression from a dream I cannot say. But certain it is that when he had reached his twelfth year he was conscious of the presence of a man in the house—a man whom he had never seen.

It was not a matter of the least wonder to him that the man did not personally appear before his eyes. The conviction somehow had fastened itself on his boyish understanding that the man had a perfect right to be in the house—to live there. It also seemed that the man was in certain ways supernatural and acted in some sort of providential capacity as Bronson's protector. The lad had never paused to consider why so singular a being was at all needed for such a purpose, especially since his parents were devoted to him. But among boys there is a great deal of clairvoyance that is quite destitute of logic.

Bronson could never get this man who lived in the house out of his mind. Every night after being put to bed by his good old nurse, Mary Bascom, he tried to picture mentally how this man looked; but he could never satisfy himself as to the physiological type, and therefore was obliged to content himself with a vague conception.

One night, while thus thinking, he asked himself the question: "If this man lives in our house, in what part of the house does he live?" In the kitchen-garret, among the rubbish of previous years' Spring cleaning? That was possible, but he did not relish the fancy of the man's living up there. Why, the man was too ro-

mantic, too aristocratic, to make the kitchen-garret his headquarters. Nor would he be happy or comfortable in the cold cellar. Then there was the spacious and seldom visited loft in the left wing of Red Gables. But Bronson put that place, too, out of the question. Finally, he came to the conclusion that the man lived between the thick walls of the pretentious mansion.

All the windows of this house were deeply embrasured. Bronson's father had often complained that the architect had not fully carried out his orders in constructing the building, and he had always been displeased with the deep windows, which, he said, made the rooms gloomy and reminded him of the apertures in a fort where ordnance is placed. Bronson had heard him say also that he could never understand why the architect had so constructed the inner and outer walls of the house as to leave between them a considerable space.

Once convinced that the man lived between the walls of the house, Bronson never relinquished the idea for a moment. And to render it easier for such a belief, he conceived his invisible guardian to be a physically small specimen of the *genus homo* and capable on occasion of making himself still smaller by some mysterious, not to say ridiculous, process of infolding his bones and contracting his muscles and sinews. Moreover, he imagined the man to be as agile as a monkey, and thought if he so desired he could easily climb up between the hollow walls to the very roof.

As time went on, Bronson's attach-

ment for this unseen man in the house deepened and he had a great longing to meet Mr. Hider, as he called him, face to face. He wondered if he ever should see him. Sometimes he found relief in the thought that Mr. Hider was only waiting for him to grow up, in order to explain everything to him.

Bronson often wondered what the man ate and where he procured his sustenance. In truth, this was the only solicitude the youth felt concerning Mr. Hider; in all other respects he felt assured that the man was able to take care of himself. For a long time—more than two years—he was perplexed with doubts as to the manner in which the man obtained the requisite provender to keep himself alive. It frequently occurred to him that in the dead of night, when the household was quiet and every inmate of Red Gables asleep, Mr. Hider would stealthily creep from his place of concealment, leave the house and go on a foraging expedition throughout the neighborhood, returning ere daybreak with a goodly supply of food.

But later on he discarded that idea, preferring to believe that the man was too sensible to trespass upon other people's premises when he could find so much better an assortment of edibles—cold food, to be sure, but still the delicate remains of a rich man's board—in the Insull larder. For it may be said that Bronson's father, unlike many wealthy men, enjoyed good living. This gentleman often was reminded of his fame as a *bon vivant* in his bachelor days by old friends, who came from afar to enjoy the hospitality of Red Gables. Yes, Bronson said to himself, the man, of course, got his food in the house.

One evening a brilliant scheme popped into the boy's head. He resolved to visit the pantry and make a sufficiently minute inspection of the cold remnants of dinner, their position on the plates and dishes holding them, even their surface configuration, to be able to tell upon

examination early the next morning whether any of them had been abstracted during the hours of darkness.

After the servants had finished their work and left the kitchen for the night, Bronson tiptoed through it into the snug pantry and opened the two sliding doors of the hardwood cupboard, having placed on a convenient stool the small hand-lamp he had brought. A large china bowl containing cold mashed potatoes first arrested his attention. He took mental note of the undulations of the gelid substance, especially observing toward the right side of the utensil a peculiarly defined hillock with twin spurs, so to speak, a conformation he was certain he could remember. Nearby he spied a rectangular cut-glass dish containing, as he ascertained by count, nine slices of pickled beet. They all looked about alike, and so he passed them by with a mental registration of their number.

A few inches further to the right lay the great silver platter, holding parts of two still-meat-encased skeletons of pheasants. Bronson noticed that a great deal of the sage stuffing had been left over, and lay about on the dish in unsympathetic groups and isolated morsels; also that some loose slices of the fowls had been laid overlapping along the platter's fluted rim by the tidy servant who had put the viands away. His particular scrutiny was addressed to the quantity and relative position of the stuffing, and then he counted the number of slices of meat thus placed, which he found to be fourteen. A glance at another dish he thought would suffice for his purpose. That dish contained olives. Their number equaled exactly the letters of the English alphabet. Quietly he made his way back to his chamber, having first gone to kiss his mother and father good night.

For several hours after Bronson went to bed his overtures to Morpheus were unavailing. His heart was accelerated by a feverish impulse consequent upon his venture into the culinary depart-

ment of the house, and his brain was hot with impatience for the revelation of the morrow. What would be the result? Would all his faith be shattered by the non-committal testimony of the pantry?

The low chirping of a night-bird in a tree just outside the window lulled him to sleep at last. His mind, charged with the duty of waking up early, did not fail. What boy ever overslept when a circus was to arrive in town at daybreak? Not less exciting than a circus was this errand to the pantry. So at five he tossed out of bed and, clad in pajamas, stole down-stairs with rapidly pulsing heart. No one was yet astir, but he took the precaution to go stealthily. Soon reaching the pantry he lost no time in opening the cupboard door.

Looking into the nearest dish, he was unable to make out at first whether any part of the mashed potatoes which it contained had been removed. But presently he saw that one of the twin spurs was missing. Apparently the equivalent of a teaspoonful had been taken. Still this did not positively convince him. Further investigation revealed the fact that only eight slices of pickled beet remained in the cut-glass dish, and on the rim of the large silver platter he could find only thirteen slices of pheasant meat. Besides, a nominal portion of the sage stuffing seemed to be gone. By careful counting, he found that the olives numbered but twenty-four.

He did not pause in the pantry to speculate, but closing the cupboard doors cautiously returned to his own chamber. As he crawled back into bed, he wondered why he was not amazed over his discovery. But he accepted it as a matter of course and went to sleep again within ten minutes.

Subsequently, on different occasions, he made similar tests to satisfy himself that the man in the house availed himself of a few of all the cold scraps he might find in the pantry, and never once did Bronson's investigations fail to produce evidence that Mr. Hider depended on his nocturnal excursions

to this place to keep his body and soul together.

II

BRONSON had always been a "mother's boy." An only child, perhaps he could not have well been otherwise. At all events, being the image of his mother and inheriting more or less her temperament, traits and tastes, he was far more in touch with her nature than with that of his father, who, though tender-hearted, was a positive and thoroughly masculine being.

Ambrose Insull was a college-bred man and a slave to books; yet he had a habit of belittling the efforts of those among his large circle of friends and acquaintances who pursued the fine arts, *belles-lettres* and the like. However, this may have been caused by a keen sense of the ridiculous rather than by any malicious intent on his part to wound the feelings of others.

As Bronson could judge of human nature from the standpoint of a young man approaching his seventeenth birthday, it did not seem to him that his father was making out of his life all that his mental attainments and superb social *finesse* entitled him to. But it was one of the peculiarities of the elder Insull's disposition that he would not place himself under any sort of polite obligation to others. What he had to offer in the way of hospitality his friends were cordially welcome to partake of, but always and distinctly on his own terms; for he never counted on, nor would he accept, even in the few isolated cases of his most intimate college friends, the least show of reciprocity.

In a half-jocular way, Ambrose Insull would assert that he never went anywhere, because he was treated well enough in his own home. As likely as not, he would add that he carried in his pocket the key of his wine cabinet and that he employed a chef who would not act disagreeably if summoned from the midst of the most profound slumbers.

Between Mr. Insull and his wife there seemed to exist a perfect bond of affec-

tion, such as one seldom sees. She was a rather undemonstrative woman in all things save where her husband was concerned. Her natural and somewhat sad reserve seemed to Bronson to grow deeper with time. He often detected in her face when she looked at him an expression of mysterious inquiry. He did not wish to comprehend what she was thinking when she thus gazed into his eyes. But involuntarily the disturbing conviction became fixed in his mind that his dear mother knew of the presence of the man in the house and that she carried in her heart a great secret which was gradually crushing out her life with its agonizing weight.

With the mystery thus complicated, Bronson could not refrain from watching her with a singular and overpowering interest. That she had ever caught a glimpse of the man, much less exchanged a word with him, the youth did not suspect for a moment. But he fancied he could detect in her an evidence of inward fear, as of some impending calamity. What caused him more concern than aught else was her deepening pallor. This seemed to him the wan shadow of her silent unhappiness. She was subject to fainting spells, which would sometimes seize her at table. In such emergencies she was, amid much anxiety, carried to her sleeping-chamber in her husband's arms.

To his dying day Bronson will not forget one uncanny experience which but substantiated the belief that his mother knew something concerning the man in the house. His sleeping-room was in the second story, directly above that occupied by his mother. One night he awoke suddenly—an unusual occurrence, for he, like his father, was a deep sleeper. He heard a sound as of some one pounding cautiously. This peculiar noise evidently proceeded from behind the wall, just above the mantel on the south side of the room.

Bronson listened intently and with rapidly increasing excitement. Still the measured, muffled blows contin-

ued. It was as if some one were driving a nail, over the head of which was held a thick piece of cloth to diminish the sound. Presently the blows ceased, and in bewilderment he raised himself on his elbow. Then a soft, languishing sigh startled him. Turning his head he saw standing at the foot of his bed a figure clothed in white. In the amber rays of the moon which poured into the room through the half-swiveled shutters of the two windows, he recognized his mother. Her eyes were averted, her hands clasped and extended as if she were uttering a prayer.

"Mother!" Bronson cried, his own voice filling him with a nameless alarm.

"My son! my son!" she answered, in tones of infinite anguish. Then she placed a white, emaciated finger perpendicularly across her closed lips, and in another moment had fled from the scene like a spirit. His first impulse was to rush after her, to implore her to explain to him why, in the dead of night, she had come to his room. A sort of madness possessed him to learn what she knew about all this mystery. But before he had roused himself to action—to pursue her—he heard the door of her apartment down-stairs shut and an instant later the key clicked in the lock. He thought it would be useless to go down and demand admission. If his father were awakened he would insist on knowing what was the matter, and it was farthest from the young man's wish to confide to Ambrose Insull the secret, and be laughed at and called a fool. No, he would get through the night as best he could and in the morning he would have a straightforward talk with his mother.

The remainder of those starry hours was filled with wretchedness for him. How cordially he welcomed the first faint shaft of dawn that entered the chamber! He rose, took a cold bath, dressed himself and, going out of the house through the servants' quarters, proceeded to the stables. Four hours in the saddle proved an admirable tonic for his nerves. He rode briskly along an excellent country highway

for many miles, finding a more soothing companionship in his willing thoroughbred than he had ever experienced before, though he had always been a lover of horses.

His father and two gentlemen guests, arrived that morning, had just seated themselves as Bronson entered the dining-room.

"Ah, there is the missing boy," was his father's pleasant greeting.

"Been taking a canter over the countryside?" asked one of the guests; while the other amiably said: "Good morning, Bronson!"

"I'm glad you have come, my son, as you can now take my place in looking after our friends here. Your mother is very ill. The doctor is now with her. Gentlemen, if you will excuse me I shall go and see if I can do anything for Mrs. Insull." And he sadly left the room. Personally, Bronson was too undone by the announcement of his mother's illness to play the rôle of an agreeable host; but the gentlemen were old friends and they sympathetically appreciated the situation.

"Do not worry yourself about us in the slightest," urged Mr. Harkney.

"No, indeed," put in Mr. Tyng. "We expected to stay here only for a few hours. We are on our way to Balsam Lake for a week's fishing, you know; and we must get that eleven-o'clock train going west."

Bronson endeavored to assure them that there was no need of their hurrying away; but they both reiterated their desire to leave on the morning train, as it had been their intention to do.

After breakfast Bronson went to his mother's room. The doctor approached him and whispered: "I would not advise you to stay here long, Bronson. Your mother is delirious, and your presence may excite her the more. She has been calling your name in the most pitiful manner and talking incoherently. Now withdraw, like a good boy, and perhaps you may see her later in the day."

Thereupon Bronson left the room, utterly depressed. In a few moments

Mr. Harkney and Mr. Tyng appeared on the southern piazza with their luggage and fishing traps. Bronson ordered the two-seated drag and, though the departing gentlemen tried to dissuade him from doing so, accompanied them to the Fairfield station, eight miles distant from Red Gables, where he bade them good-bye.

On the homeward ride the young man's thoughts and apprehensions mingled in rampant confusion. He naturally attributed his mother's serious attack to the weird proceedings of the previous night. And his doubts and vague suspicions tortured him all the more now, since he realized that her sickness might be of prolonged duration, in which event he should be deprived of the possible consolation to be derived from a frank interview with her on the subject that, he was persuaded, affected her as much as himself. On reaching home he encountered his father in the broad hall that extended the length of the main wing. The latter's face wore a gravity the significance of which it was not difficult to interpret.

"Your mother is worse," said he, his eyes filling with tears. "Dr. Sexton has been summoned in consultation. Oh, if Helen should die—what would become of me?" he added to himself, but in a voice not inaudible to his son, while he shook with sobs.

"May I not go and see her?" Bronson asked, an augmented sense of desolation sweeping over him at the sight of his poor father.

"No; the doctors have sent even me away."

"When was she taken ill?"

"At about half-past four this morning. Her groans awoke me. She complained of terrible pains in her head and she was in a raging fever. I sent for Dr. Haloway at six."

With these words Ambrose Insull passed out of his son's sight—a picture of woe.

Day by day Mrs. Insull's condition grew more critical. It was a case that fairly baffled the doctors. All they would positively aver was that she

must have received some severe mental shock. Bronson was allowed to see her a few minutes before her spirit went out into the Unknowable. Her eyes were closed. Her breath was fitful and scarcely perceptible. She did not recognize her boy when he spoke to her, nor did even so much as the quiver of an eyelid indicate that she knew he was standing beside her. He did not know when her breath ceased.

III

AMBROSE INSULL was a changed man from the hour of his wife's death. He was different in almost every way. His very reason, for a time, was threatened. He grew intolerant and crabbed toward every one, including Bronson. He addressed the boy in harsh language, and said he must pack up his traps and be off to college in the Autumn.

In other circumstances, going away from home would have been something of a sorrow to Bronson. Though nearly eighteen years of age, he had never been fifty miles from home unaccompanied by his parents. He had always had a private tutor, to whom he was much attached. This tutor Ambrose Insull summarily dismissed one morning, with the injunction never to put his foot inside Red Gables again. For these and other reasons, Bronson rather welcomed the hour when he should leave the scenes which once had afforded him so much happiness, but which now, alas! only weighed him down with misery.

His father developed the most astonishing eccentricities. Strange faces began to appear in the house. Men whom Bronson had never seen before, and with whom, he was certain, his father had had no extended previous acquaintance, roamed about the house at will, played games of chance in different rooms, even using the stables for that purpose, and otherwise conducted themselves like discredited sporting men and cheap voluptuaries. Wine flowed too freely all day long and at

night as well. Red Gables became a somewhat disreputable abode.

Several times Bronson remonstrated with his father, but all his reformatory efforts only exasperated the poor gentleman and to such a degree that on one or two occasions he threatened Bronson with bodily injury if he did not keep "beautifully out of the way." Moreover, at this period, Bronson never saw his father when not in his cups—a sight from which the youth recoiled with a genuine heart pang. He knew it must be a question of but a short time when, at the rate his was father going, all his riches would take wings and fly away.

Bronson was glad when the fifth of September came—the day he left for college. His father gave him ample funds to meet his expenses for a year, and Mr. Insull's last words to him were:

"Don't trouble yourself, Bronson, to come home during your vacations. When you have graduated, then put in an appearance and we will talk over what you are best fitted for."

This was his brusque farewell. But somehow the words fell short of wounding Bronson's feelings in the least. As he was driven to the station he wondered if the man who lived in Red Gables were wholly pleased with things there and if he would not find his subsistence more difficult to obtain, now that the house was turned topsyturvy night and day. Indeed, this thought brought to Bronson's eyes an honest tear of compassion for Mr. Hider.

Bronson passed a creditable examination, his old tutor having been a careful and thorough instructor, and soon he was comfortably settled in rooms in Stoughton with a classmate from Rhode Island. At irregular intervals he received brief letters from his father.

During the holidays Bronson was down with pneumonia, but, thanks to his chum's excellent nursing and a skillful physician, he speedily recovered. The Spring vacation he spent on a delightful bicycle tour through a portion

of Nova Scotia. When the Summer respite from books came he hardly knew where to go or what to do. His father had commanded him to remain away from Red Gables until he had graduated. But, as for that, he now thoroughly dreaded to return home, for that home was under a heavy mortgage, so his old tutor had written him late in May. The letter was dated from the city of Fairfield, where the tutor had found a position in a young ladies' seminary. He wrote that he had kept himself informed for Bronson's sake of what was going on at Red Gables and that he had heard, on trustworthy authority, that Mr. Insull had not only wantonly dissipated his fortune, but had mortgaged the entire property in order to pay debts of honor—the outcome of losses at cards and horse-racing. "I hear," wrote the tutor, "that your father will be obliged to give up the old home some time in October, when the mortgage will be foreclosed, unless, in some at present-unforeseen way, he may be able to redeem it. Sad news must this be to you, my dear Bronson, who have passed so many, many joyous hours in that beautiful mansion."

Dejected beyond expression, Bronson went to New York and called on his uncle, his mother's half-brother, who had vainly endeavored to point out to his father that he certainly would be dashed upon the reefs of ruin if he did not change his course. This uncle, a Wall-street broker, received Bronson with gracious pity. The young man informed him exactly how his father's matters stood.

"Of course," he concluded, "I shall be unable to finish my college course, and it is my intention at once to seek some employment."

"Well, Bronson, I guess there is a modest clerkship for you here in my office. For the present you may consider yourself a member of my family. Report here to-morrow at half-past eight and work will be assigned you. We will consider your salary later."

How feeble to Bronson seemed his attempts to express his gratitude to his

benefactor! But the latter said it was not necessary for the young man to try to do so save by strict attention to business in the future. He was made welcome in his Uncle Edward's family, which consisted of two sons—wild blades they were, too—and a lovely daughter, Isabelle.

Within a short time Bronson wrote his father, telling him of the move he had made and how kind his uncle had been to give him a position and a home. He could not refrain from saying that information relating to his father's recent misfortunes had come to his knowledge and had aroused his deepest sympathy. More than two months elapsed before the father answered this letter. But when his message did come, its contents amply repaid Bronson for his weary waiting. Mr. Insull wrote as follows:

September 4, 1900.

MY DEAR SON: I address you this letter as I sit in an upper room of the cottage of our old gardener, Michael Cassidy. I am boarding with him now and have been for nearly a fortnight, and I cannot tell you how long I shall remain with him. He is a good old soul and is still fond of me, in spite of my troubles. The fact is, Bronson, my son, I cannot live under the roof of Red Gables any longer. I am to be dispossessed in October and it was better that I should get out in the way I have, thus avoiding the awkwardness of being forced out.

There is another reason why I preferred to leave the old house and that is this: Red Gables is haunted. Yes, my boy, that house shelters a spectre—a ghost. It is the asylum of the most vociferous spook that ever made human blood run cold. Do not think me bereft of my right mind when I pen these words. You know very well that I have always discredited the existence of spirits and that I would as soon believe in bogies and brownies and all that unearthly ilk. But I have had positive proof that some kind of a wraith inhabits our old house.

The first evidence of this fact came to me shortly after you went away to college. Half a dozen or more of us were in the dining-room one night, engaged in a rather roisterous bout at poker. We were making considerable noise and one or two of the boys were singing. Suddenly, several loud and distinct raps were heard, and then a piping voice said: "Stop your revels! Stop your revels!"

Some one suggested that Bob Herst, one of the company, was trying to palm off on us some of his famous ventriloquism,

We soon forgot the interruption and became as hilarious as ever. Again came the quick raps, this time seemingly produced on some kind of thin metal, and again the elfish voice exclaimed: "Stop your revels!"

We looked at one another curiously, and at last I said: "Who is perpetrating this cheap imitation of a ghost? I assure him, whoever he is, that his efforts, besides being in bad taste, utterly fail in their probable intention of frightening men." On the heels of my remarks came a more dissonant rattling than before, apparently from between the walls near one of the windows, followed by the now threadbare but louder-voiced appeal: "Stop your revels!"

This was too much for me. I rose from the table indignantly, and said: "If I discover the man who is doing this cowardly work, I will cut short his stay in this house."

"Hear! hear!" echoed several of the company, and Bob Herst remarked: "I assure you, Ambrose, this is none of my faking, and I should like to see the fellow that is up to this sort of thing ducked in a mud-puddle."

Soon afterward the company dispersed for the night. Before going to bed I ordered the butler, James Tuttle, and a stable-boy to stay up all night and watch out for this saucy hobgoblin. Two hours later, I heard three raps on the wall near the head of my bed. I was dozing at the time—not sleeping soundly. I leaped to the floor, turned on the gas, seized my revolver and stood ready to send a bullet into the first living thing I might see. Silence ensued. I waited a long time for a recurrence of the raps, but none sounded. At last, on the verge of daylight, worn out with my futile vigil, I lay down and was soon asleep.

The next manifestation of the ghost occurred two or three days later, while we were at dinner. My friends had been dipping liberally into my old Burgundy and, at the tag end of the feast, were inclined to be festive. Having heard the singular rat-tat-a-tat-tat several times and the usual command, uttered in a shrill crescendo, one of the guests said: "The ghost does not seem to be afraid of making himself heard in daylight. This is becoming serious."

So it was. I was curiously perplexed. We immediately left the table, and I think every man in the party was more or less impressed. Thus it went on for months. When my guests most caroused the ghost acted like an excited delegate from Hades. But to a large extent I was not myself, by reason of constant over-indulgence in stimulants, which deadened my sensibilities. To this indulgence, too—oh, fool that I have been!—was due the loss of my estate.

My alleged friends robbed me right and left—under my very nose, to use an old-fashioned phrase. But I was half-crazy with wine most of the time and did not really know what was going on around me.

Meanwhile, the ghost was very active, so my friends said. Its existence, however, had become an old story to me, though it actually frightened away some of my guests and servants. Finally, about six weeks ago, a true friend told me that I must call a halt. "Why," said he, "do you know you have lost nearly everything you possessed? Are you aware that Red Gables is mortgaged close to its market value and that ruin stares you in the face?"

These inquiries brought me to my senses. I had been living in a sodden daze for more than a year. I asked my friend what was to be done to retrieve my fortune. He answered: "Nothing; you can do nothing. It is too late. You have been swindled and fleeced as no man ever was before."

"Well," I said to myself, after my friend had left me and I was calmer, "God have mercy on me! I have made a miserable tilt of it; but I shall do one more graceful act to my old friends before I quit Red Gables. I am certain there is enough wine left in the cellars for one good carouse. And why should my dishonest creditors have it?"

Stern and practical with a new resolve, I sent adrift every guest then under the roof, except my honest friend, Bob Herst, who had warned me of the terrible goal toward which I had been drifting. I discharged every new servant on the premises and a few survivors of the old régime whom I had any reason to suspect. And every pretended friend—not of old standing—who came to my house I advised to leave at once, if he did not wish to be arrested as a criminal intruder.

For three days I toiled over my invitations, which I sent only to my old friends. I sent out one hundred and fifty to the Red Gables farewell dinner—some of them to people residing in remote places. Twelve days later my house was filled with the "dear old familiar faces." On the following day the dinner was to take place. Nearly one hundred ladies and gentlemen had responded in person to my epistolary summons. The others who were invited, half as many more, had sent regrets—double regrets, some of them seemed to me, inasmuch as they conveyed stilted sympathy for me in my social and financial downfall. I did not invite you, dear boy, to this dinner, because—well, never mind why.

At five o'clock in the afternoon we sat down to our banquet. A better one had never been served at Red Gables. I felt quite like my old self. Ah, I was a host again and these were my guests! Reminiscences of the old days led to very frequent clinking of glasses, whose amber and ruby contents loosened tongues to hearty compliments and merry quips. I was inwardly congratulating myself that this was the dinner *par excellence* of those in the long list of my hostship, when suddenly,

just as the last stroke of nine sounded from the throat of the old Dutch clock in the corner, there came, as from between the walls, several sharp raps that instantly arrested the attention of the jovial company.

Rumors that Red Gables was haunted had traveled far and wide and doubtless had kept away some persons who otherwise would have been delighted to attend the dinner. The faces of several of the ladies blanched as, succeeding the raps, were very distinctly heard the violin strains of "Home, Sweet Home." The phrasing of the old melody was simply beautiful and the subdued, dream-like air came to our ears as if wafted through some grove of fragrant blossoms from a far-away paradise. It did not last more than a minute, but every heart thrilled with the magnificent touch of its spiritual beauty. We men made no attempt to conceal our admiration. Those of the ladies who were not too numb and cold with fright listened in bewilderment and smiled with every outward semblance of rapture. And, following the soft termination of the enchanting strains, came an instant's silence; then that sibilant voice, saying: "Stop your revels!" Every one arose, and nearly all rushed out in search of open air—intent on escaping some dreaded apparition.

Some came up to me to say good-bye. They could not stay all night. My head stableman found it difficult on such short notice to procure a sufficient number of conveyances throughout the neighborhood to carry all the guests to the Fairfield station. It was after two o'clock in the morning when the last load of visitors departed.

To tell you the unvarnished truth, I did not have the temerity to sleep that night under the roof of Red Gables. Finally, I sauntered down to the gardener's cottage and routed out Michael Cassidy. I told him I desired a lodging for the night and perhaps for several nights to follow. "Bliss yer sowl," said Michael, as he stood blinking in the doorway of his cosy little domicile, "ye can stay here as long as ye live, providin' ye can put up wid the old woman's victuals."

Bronson, my son, I have been thinking very seriously over matters of late, and I have come to the conclusion that Red Gables is haunted by your dear mother's spirit. How long her spirit will remain there, now that I have practically left that house for good and all and that it is to pass into other hands, I cannot say. But I do not think Red Gables will be her habitation. I feel that her spirit will haunt the gloomy chambers of my soul until I am restored to my old self in every way. Moreover, I hope that her spirit will yet be proud of me, who have transgressed of late so flagrantly the laws of life and of common sense, and by the grace of God I mean to be a better man than I have ever been.

I long to see my boy, whom I so heart-

lessly thrust from home. I shall go to you soon, dear son, or you must come to see your poor father. If you should come to see me quite soon, do not go to Red Gables to find me, for I shall be at Michael Cassidy's.

Ever your affectionate father,
AMBROSE INSULL.

IV

THE perusal of this long letter furnished to Bronson's mind a wholesome cheer, notwithstanding a coincident feeling of sadness that naturally obtruded itself in connection with the loss of Red Gables. But it was a source of rare satisfaction to know that his father actually believed the house to be haunted by his wife's spirit. Indeed, his story reinforced the young man's convictions quite to the contrary, giving, as it did, a more circumstantial coloring to evidence long established in his consciousness. But why should he try to disabuse his father's mind of a belief through whose agency his moral salvation was being effected? Was it not his duty to remain silent and let Mr. Insull's innocent faith in the nearness to him of his wife's spirit blossom into all the beauty of action? The idea captivated him, and he resolved to follow this course; that is to say, to keep from his father's knowledge his version of the mystery of Red Gables.

His uncle's business was one to which Bronson was not especially well adapted, though his willingness and diligence his Uncle Edward rewarded by a promotion before he had been in his employ two months. About a week after this Red Gables was sold under the auctioneer's gavel. It was bid in by the mortgagee, a banker of Fairfield named Luscombe, who gave orders at once to have the old mansion torn down. On its site he proposed to erect a modern structure of stone for his private residence.

Mr. Insull wrote his son briefly regarding the sale. He said a considerable number of personal effects of the Insull family not covered by mortgage had been removed from Red

Gables and stored in a vacant house at Roger's Creek, which had always been the Insull's post-office address. Banker Luscombe presented to Mr. Insull one black span of coach horses; and Bronson's thoroughbred, he told Mr. Insull, he desired the young man to retain as his own. The three horses had been given into the care of Henry Weeks, the keeper of a modest livery-stable at Roger's Creek.

The next communication from his father, some ten days later, reached Bronson by wire. The telegram read thus:

Startling discovery at Red Gables. Come at once. Your presence absolutely imperative.

Bronson lost no time in notifying his uncle of the urgency of the summons. Mr. Wavell advised him to go by all means. Without pausing to pack even his grip, he hastened to the railway station. When he reached Fairfield his father was awaiting him with a carriage. At a glance Bronson noted the extreme pallor of his usually florid face, and the decrease in his avoirdupois.

"What has happened?" the young man asked, eagerly, as they shook hands.

"Well, my son, you can probably tell me after you have opened the strong-box. Step into this carriage and we will be off at once."

"The strong-box?" Bronson repeated, in amazement.

"That is what I said," replied the father, somewhat testily. "The long and short of it is simply this: Workmen began demolishing Red Gables several days ago. Yesterday afternoon and to-day they have been exposing to view the most surprising evidences that some person has been living for years between the walls of our old home."

"Ah!" Bronson gasped, nervously, half overcome by the rush of youthful memories of this "some person" his father had just mentioned.

"Yes," went on Mr. Insull, "they have found, between the walls on the south side of the dining-room, bones which at first were thought to be those

of a skeleton. But further investigations disproved that theory. They have turned out to be meat bones. This person must have been able to get pretty well over and about the entire house without necessarily walking through the rooms. Pegs arranged about two feet apart, some running diagonally, others ladder-wise, have been discovered. Then they have found tools of various kinds and, opposite the room your mother used as a sleeping apartment, they found a sort of home-made hammock, where this person was in the habit of sleeping. Hundreds of empty tin cans that had contained preserved meats, vegetables and fruits have been unearthed near the extremity of the west wing. I cannot begin to enumerate the odd things the workmen have brought to light; and they have not come to the end, by any means. One of the laborers found a violin having but one string. It is old and warped, but in its day it must have been a superior instrument. I wonder if this is the pathetic violin whose touching melody we heard on the night of my farewell dinner at Red Gables. Ah, yes, I suppose it is the same. But the thing to which the greatest importance is attached is a strong-box made of steel, with a combination lock, found between the walls behind the mantel in your bedchamber. There can be no doubt that it is yours, for on the lid is pasted a slip of paper bearing these words:

This box and its contents are the sole property of Bronson Insull. The giver's name is within.

The box is in my possession and is locked in my room in Michael Cassidy's cottage."

By the time they reached the cottage Bronson was in a fever of eagerness to open the box. Michael sat in the living-room of his domicile, with his coat off, enjoying his pipe, as they entered. The good-natured old Hibernian, who had been in Mr. Insull's employ for many years, seemed genuinely glad to see Bronson.

"You had better let Michael, who is an old hand at tinkering, open the

box in our presence," advised the father; to which suggestion the son assented.

Michael went to an outhouse for the requisite tools. In the meantime, Mr. Insull brought down the box from his bedchamber. It was perhaps eight by ten inches in size, very heavy and somewhat stained with rust. It proved a hard box to open. More than a half-hour passed before the steel bolt, one-quarter of an inch in thickness, yielded to Michael's blows. Finally, the steel slide in the lock was cut and the lid was raised.

Turning to his son, Mr. Insull remarked, in a low voice: "Anxious as I am to know what the box contains, I think it only right that you should retire up-stairs and first look over the contents yourself."

Humoring the notion, Bronson proceeded alone to his father's sleeping-chamber. The box was full of papers and documents. At the bottom his eyes fell on a beautiful gold watch and chain, several diamond rings and a scarf-pin set with the largest and brightest ruby he had ever seen. In one package there were crisp, unused bank-notes to the amount of \$20,000. Railroad securities representing \$50,000 in value, title deeds of property in Chicago and New Orleans aggregating in value \$300,000, United States Government bonds worth \$75,000, other securities and bonds amounting, *in toto*, to over a million. A will and a document bearing the title, "A Statement," completed the contents of the box. Was it possible that all this belonged exclusively to him? Was it not too much like a dream to be true? Turning to the statement, Bronson read as follows:

September 10, 1900.

I, Emile Martinot, who indite these words, will tell my story in my own way and make it as concise as I am able. It is addressed exclusively to you, Bronson Insull.

I was born in the Rue Dinanderie, in Rouen, France—never mind the year. My father married a lady of some means, as you say in America, and he made a snug little competence himself—in the confectionery business. His factory and

shop were in the Place du Gaillardbois. I was the next to the youngest of seven children—four girls and three boys, who have, in a material sense, all done well. But two of the children—perhaps more—are not happy. One of them, Charles, is married to a woman whom he despises but endures, and the other is myself.

From early boyhood my ambition was to be a chemist, and when, at eighteen years of age, I entered the University of Paris to pursue a scientific course, it was with the assurance from my father that after my graduation he would set me up in business, *c'est-à-dire*, provide me with an equipped laboratory and a reasonable "sinking fund" in whatever place I might choose.

During my post-graduate course at the university, my father, through bad investments, met with reverses so disastrous as to compel the family to move into very humble quarters indeed. Dots of more or less magnitude are given with daughters in marriage in France, and that was the way my mother, being ambitious for her daughters, deprived herself of her patrimony; thus, when my father's failure occurred, there was little or nothing to fall back upon. An old friend gave him a clerkship which yielded him a modest income, and Charles, I believe, who already had entered into his unhappy matrimonial life, assisted my parents to some extent.

On learning of my father's business troubles and that I could expect no further help from him, I was keenly discouraged; in fact, disgusted. In a fit of anger I resolved to let chemistry go to the dogs. There was nothing in it for me. I did not like the idea of serving a long apprenticeship and then perhaps fail in ever becoming my own master. No, indeed. I preferred to take up some pursuit in which there were quick returns.

Among the intimate friends whose acquaintance I had made while a student was Felix Bray, of New York City. He was a clever young man of wealth, whose ultimate aim was medicine; but he very sensibly had determined to become an expert chemist before trying for the degree of M.D. To him, in my extremity, I now went and told my troubles.

"What do you wish to go into?" he asked. Then he added: "I think I can loan you a sum that will be sufficient to tide you over until you can get on a paying basis."

I thanked him for his kindly offer and we proceeded to discuss different vocations in which there was a likelihood of my succeeding. I was very fond of music, being quite an accomplished player on the violin. But it did not seem to me that I should care to follow music as a profession. At last, it occurred to me that I might succeed as a conjurer, a magician. I suggested the idea to Felix.

"Yes," said he, "that field is not crowded,

like many others, and there is a chance to make a fortune in it. You ought to be able, with your scientific knowledge, to originate and invent many novelties in the black art. Really, now that I come to think about it, you are eminently adapted for this calling. You are small in stature, athletic, quick in movement, and you can contort your limbs and squeeze yourself into the smallest compass of any man I ever heard of. Go in and win," urged Felix, who, before the end of our interview, made me a loan of \$2,000, for which I gave him a note to run three years.

Bravely I went to work. The great Houdin, then all the rage in Paris, gave me lessons. I experimented *in extenso* on my own account. Night and day my mind was on the *qui vive* for new discoveries. After several months of laborious study and practice I began giving entertainments in magic. People pronounced me clever. I was soon able to command two hundred and fifty francs for an evening's performance. A little later I appeared as the chief attraction in the vaudeville theatres of Paris.

A year afterward I started on an extended professional tour throughout Europe. In the meantime I had discharged my debt to Felix Bray, who had returned to New York and was grinding away at his studies in the College of Physicians and Surgeons. My tour proved remarkably successful. On my return to Paris I paid a flying visit to Rouen. I had saved \$15,000, out of which I gave my father \$10,000. He was getting old and feeble and he greatly mourned the loss of my mother, who had died a year before. It gratified me to know that this money would keep him for the rest of his life in comfort. I bade him good-bye and never saw him again. Returning to Paris, I remained there a year. Then, during the following season, I filled engagements in Vienna, Munich, St. Petersburg and other capitals.

Three years later I came to America with a vaudeville company. Soon after my arrival in New York I went to see my old friend Felix. He was now the celebrated Dr. Bray, with an extensive practice among the best society people. It lacked a fortnight to the date on which we were announced to appear. During this interim I saw the doctor frequently. On New Year's Day I went calling with him—the custom being still in vogue then. We made innumerable calls. Ah, the house I remember best of all was situated on East Twenty-first street. The name of the young lady on whom we called there was—Miss Helen Wavell. Do not be startled. There is more to tell.

I saw her—I loved her! Such eyes, such a face of pearly freshness! Oh, God! but she was the fairest woman I ever laid my eyes on! The doctor introduced me

as Professor Martinot, the famous necromancer, the Prince of Wizards, and all that sort of thing. Of course she had heard of me. I was billed all over New York, and my triumphs in Europe, as well as my personal peculiarities, were being discussed in the public prints. She and her friend, Miss Dalton, who was helping her to receive that day, expressed themselves as charmed to meet me. Your mother—I should say Miss Wavell—at that time was about twenty years of age. She was at her best in every way. Our stay in such enchanting society was all too brief, though we remained there longer than anywhere else; for the doctor was in love with Miss Dalton, and, by the way, married her a year afterward. On taking our leave I asked Miss Wavell if she would do me the honor to accept some complimentary seats for the opening night of the performance. She did so, graciously. We went on paying our New Year's calls and imbibing a glass of sherry or punch or champagne at every house. How jolly was that old custom, so *à la* New York! But I was absorbed wholly in thought of Miss Wavell.

I sent her a ticket for one of the lower left-hand boxes at Niblo's. How impatiently I longed for the night to come! The first feature on the program was myself and my act lasted half an hour. Before the curtain rose—it was three minutes to eight and the orchestra was thundering the overture—I gazed through the peep-hole into that lower left-hand box. She was there! She looked a paragon of virgin loveliness, dressed in white, with the daintiest kind of a hat trimmed in sky-blue. Several others were in the box, among them two elderly people, probably her parents, but I gave them only a passing glance.

My heart was in a flutter. I naturally desired to score a hit before my first New York audience, but a fonder ambition was to delight her. I intended to do my best.

Ting-ling! The orchestra is playing my entrance cue. I emerge from the wings upon the broad stage, which is set with the paraphernalia of my art. The audience applauds; the gallery gods yell and whistle. Miss Wavell smiles a recognition, which is unprofessionally returned with double interest. I try to bow gracefully to the thronged auditorium. In my pidgin-English—though I afterward learned the language very thoroughly, I lisp the words: "La-dees and genteel-men: I will try to amuse you for a leetle while zeez evening. My vee-ry poor English you will pardon, *s'il vous plait*." Here I glance at Miss Wavell, to see how she is receiving my speech. I am encouraged by her frank smile. "I have to learn zee language more as I stay longer in zee great country of America. My first experiment will be weez zee cards."

I do some fancy shuffling, make the deck

seem to grow smaller until it becomes invisible and then, asking for the conductor's baton, pull ostensibly out of the end of it several cards three times the size of those in the pack originally produced. After performing several amusing illusions, I reach the great act of the evening. I produce a gilt bird-cage containing three singing canaries, place it on a table to the right of the stage and over the cage arrange a green cloth of light weight. I then exhibit a large-sized, empty carafe, such as are in use in restaurants, and having allowed two or three persons in the audience to examine it critically, I place it on another table to the left of the stage and cover it with a red cloth. Then, striking my wand gently against my head, I utter the customary hackneyed formula of sleight-of-hand artists: "Presto!—change!" Lifting the green cloth from the right-hand table, the cage and its feathered prisoners are seen to have vanished. Raising the red cloth from the left-hand table, the carafe is seen to be filled with water in which are three live and sportive goldfish. The carafe, with its contents, is submitted to the closer inspection of those in the front rows of the orchestra, after which it is again placed on the left-hand table and concealed from view under the red cloth.

Producing and brandishing a revolver, I count one, two, three—and fire. Removing the cloth there is disclosed, in place of the carafe and the goldfish, a beautiful, fresh bouquet of "Jack" roses, tied with a delicate blue ribbon. It is the pleasant task of but a moment to seize the bouquet, cross the stage and hand it to Miss Wavell, who receives it with a radiant smile and bow. My triumph is quite as complete as the trick is simple—if one knows how to do it.

I retire from the stage amid loud applause and hand-clapping. The enthusiasm continues. I reappear, bow and make a move as though to withdraw. But the audience will have more. Ah, why do I not let well enough alone? Am I then so proud of being cheered to the echo? Yet, say what you will, it is difficult not to yield to the demands of an audience when you feel assured that you still have something good to offer.

Indeed, I should have performed one or more feats of legerdemain or of juggling, but, eager to exhibit my versatility, I obeyed my impulse to do my so-called contortion act. Being of a very flexible frame, I had long practised bodily evolutions that many European audiences had vigorously cheered. I now engaged in a weird twisting of my limbs and arms, bent my body double, and achieved other semi-grotesque and sensational gyrations such as had frequently prompted the press to call me "The Human Serpent."

Having finished this fatiguing task, I bowed to the audience and, as I was about

to disappear behind the wings, glanced at Miss Wavell. Pain and repulsion dominated every other expression on her flushed face. Her eyes were downcast, as though she preferred not to meet my transient gaze. In an instant my heart seemed turned to lead. Despondently I stumbled to my dressing-room, wholly unmindful of the people, particularly in the galleries, who were still unsated. I knew I had overleaped my ambition. I knew that my last act had not been appreciated in the least by Miss Wavell, but, on the contrary, despised. What an imbecile I had been! But a portion of the audience was still shouting itself hoarse. Called out for the third time, I indifferently did a trick so transparent in its simplicity as to provoke some hisses among those who did not understand that it was meant to be facetious. Thus I was allowed to leave the stage without further ado.

For several days I was in a state of mind aptly described by the phrase, "confusion worse confounded." I appeared as advertised, but I felt like a shattered wreck, though the audience seemed pleased. During this time I saw little of Dr. Bray, who on the initial night had occupied seats in the orchestra with Miss Dalton. He came to see me once at my hotel, but I was so out of sorts that he probably thought it was best not to have anything to do with me until I was in a more amiable mood.

On the Saturday following the Monday evening on which we opened, I summoned up the necessary courage to present myself at the door of Miss Wavell's residence. A servant responded to my ring, invited me into the drawing-room and within a few minutes Miss Wavell appeared. Her manner was constrained, her reception cold. She was the only woman in the world who ever shattered my self-possession.

Excuse my candor, if you can find it in your heart to do so; but I loved her to madness. Her frigid demeanor somehow made me bold. I told her my life, all its vicissitudes and victories. I assured her, in caressing accents, of my love and, in short, asked her to be my wife. She firmly said that my offer could not be entertained for an instant. I tried to explain to her that I was rich and that I would gladly abandon my profession if it was abhorrent to her. It was futile thus to manoeuvre. Then I asked her if she had held any more exalted opinion of me previous to my doing the "contortion act." She replied prudently that possibly she had, but that her opinion of me had been at no time so favorable as to warrant her in listening to any sentimentalities from me. Her indifference and curtness piqued me. We were not getting on well. In a final desperate outburst of affection I entreated her hand. Without further ceremony she rose and bade me take leave.

A thousand combustible emotions seemed

to ignite in my soul. Wildly I declared she could not escape altogether from my presence, even though she were never my wife. I vowed that I would follow her to the ends of the earth. To be near her, wherever she might be, was my fixed determination. I would, if necessary, employ some of my magic, of which she had seen specimens. But this sort of arrogant menace did not affect her. She looked at me defiantly and said she did not fear me in the least. In an ungovernable rage I left her house, promising myself to carry out my threats to the letter.

Things were not so clear to me after that, but one did not alter my resolve to spend my life under the same roof with Helen Wavell. I became a monomaniac on the subject and was completely in the thrall of this obsession. I continued to give public exhibitions in magic, traveling throughout the United States and Canada. Through private detectives I kept informed of Miss Wavell's whereabouts and movements. It was a matter of the profoundest concern to me to know what she was doing. Every slightest word respecting her engagements and occupations I received with unbounded interest.

A little more than a year afterward, private advices reached me, while I was in San Francisco, that Miss Wavell's marriage to Ambrose Insull had been announced. This information gave me a thrill like the shock of an electric current. It was time for me to be preparing for the fulfillment of my intentions. There was no need of my toiling longer. I had already amassed a great deal of money and for the last year had been at the head of a theatrical company of my own. Fears that Miss Wavell might wed and sail away to some foreign clime where I could never find her induced me to give up my plans, cancel the season's dates and transfer the management of "The Merry-makers" into other hands. Coming directly to New York, I learned that Miss Wavell and Ambrose Insull were soon to be married.

I do not believe Dr. Bray understood how hopelessly, how frantically I was in love, nor had I any inclination to tell him. In discussing Miss Wavell with him, freely and in a civilly off-hand manner, I was able to gain a reasonably correct, if not vivid, impression of the beginning and progress of her love-affair. The doctor was an old and intimate friend of the Wavell family and his marriage to Miss Dalton had not interrupted his habit of dropping in on them at unconventional hours for a confidential chat. I thought it feasible to invent a little fib in regard to my evidently sudden severance from the theatrical business. A great commercial company was on the eve of organization, so I insinuated to the doctor. I was not at liberty to divulge details at present, but this restriction would soon be removed

and then he should know all. Without betraying any confidence, however, I could say that I expected to hold an important official position in it—perhaps that of president. The prospects of a great financial harvest had led me to invest my means in the enterprise and to retire from the field of necromancy. The friendship between Dr. Bray and me had always remained close and he insisted on my becoming his guest during my stay in New York. His invitation came from the heart and I accepted it.

The doctor occupied a handsome house on Madison avenue. It required but a day as his guest to ascertain how perfect was his home life. His wife was wholly devoted to him. Miss Wavell and she were still very intimate friends and from Mrs. Bray I learned a variety of particulars concerning young Mr. Insull, the proud scion of a wealthy and aristocratic family. She also informed me that the coming wedding was generally considered a most felicitous one on both sides.

Thus weeks flew by and at last the Insull-Wavell nuptials were solemnized at the residence of the bride. The Brays, of course, were invited. It happened that I was out of town at the time; but I am sure that I should not have been invited had I been in New York. Business connected with some real estate that I had purchased in New Orleans called me there. Three weeks later, when I returned to the metropolis, I took rooms in a hotel where I was certain of commingling more or less with my own countrymen.

Meanwhile, the bride and groom were spending their honeymoon in travel. After an absence of seven weeks they returned, and through Dr. Bray I learned that the Insulls would make their home in the country; that it was Mr. Insull's intention to build a beautiful residence there.

I now found it essential to the desired outworking of my plans to play the spy personally. I watched Ambrose Insull's movements day and night. I dogged his footsteps. From a member of his favorite club, whom fortunately I happened to know, I learned that Mr. Insull had bought a tract of land comprising many hundreds of acres in the western part of Pennsylvania, which he proposed to convert into a veritable garden.

When Ambrose Insull went to Fairfield, I followed. The name of the architect who was to submit plans of an elegant country-seat to Mr. Insull was John Cross. The latter was a well-educated young man and had been quite successful in his profession, but the indorsement of a friend's note for a large amount had nearly ruined him financially and he was exceedingly anxious to regain his former independence. I gleaned these facts gradually and made it a point not only to become acquainted with John Cross, but to cultivate him. I

was cautious, however, not to be about when Mr. Insull was in his company. Finally, Cross completed his drawings of the plans and specifications, and on the following day was to submit them to Mr. Insull, who spent most of his time giving directions as to the laying out of his estate.

Mr. Insull generally went to New York every Saturday, in order to be with his wife over Sunday, and returned to his pastoral domain on Monday. On the evening of the day John Cross finished his design of the structure, subsequently to be known as Red Gables, I invited him to come to my hotel and have dinner with me. After dinner he accompanied me to my rooms for a sociable smoke and a toss of cordial. I had studied the man carefully and had counted the chances of success in making him a proposition to which I knew he would demur, if the bribe accompanying it were not temptingly large. He was not a man to perpetrate petty deceits, being too straightforward for that. But I was convinced that, if his cupidity were appealed to in a shrewd manner, he could be induced to carry out the ideas I had formulated and had decided to lay before him. In the first place, I received his word of honor as a gentleman that if he could not favorably entertain my proposition he would never reveal it to any one; and if he did conclude to execute my commission there would be every reason in the world, for his own protection, to keep it entirely to himself.

When we were comfortably seated, I began what I had to say to John Cross. He listened intently, without once interrupting me. When I mentioned the part I desired him to play in this drama, his face, for a moment, took on a hard expression of contempt. He clenched his fists spasmodically and I truly believe he would have struck me had I not quickly named the sum of money that should be his if he would comply with my demands. But the music of the amount, \$30,000, restrained his semi-menaced violence. His features relaxed, his eyes gleamed as with a newborn hope and a smile of concession illuminated his lips.

"I will do it for just twice that sum," said he, slowly and with an effort to treat the matter casually, "but not for less."

I was tempted to chuckle, but managed to maintain a serious face. But, inwardly, I experienced a peculiar elation over the fact that I had routed his scruples—those master feelings that so often interfere with ignoble measures. Yes, John Cross would construct the walls so as to leave between them two feet of space. He would construct alcoves here and there, and in the loft of the left wing a secret trap-door for my egress and ingress. What was \$60,000 to me—the possessor of twenty times that amount? Would not John Cross be obliged to give the contractor and builder a good slice—say \$10,000 or \$15,000—in order to insure their coop-

eration and silence? And then schemes must be devised to keep Mr. Insull away from the scene during the erection of the house. Cross did not exactly know how this could be managed, but he was certain he could contrive some way of doing it. He admitted that he was naturally curious as to my motive for having this unheard-of thing done to another man's house. In fact, the more he thought of it, the stronger waxed his repulsion to the whole undertaking. Could I assure him that I had no dishonorable, no criminal intentions? Well, I could not recount all the history that had led up to this proposition; but I assured him that merely sentimental and romantic reasons had impelled me to take this step. I further reinforced my assertions by producing several bank-books, each showing a magnificent balance, as well as three or four railroad first-mortgage bonds of eye-opening value. John Cross was reassured. He would perform the service I required without further parley, on the condition that the amount agreed upon be paid to him then and there. He manifested no hesitation or doubt in accepting the five cheques made out to him, which I turned over a few moments afterward. The transaction was finished when he signed a paper to the effect that if he failed to carry out the scheme he was to refund to me \$60,000.

John Cross was necessarily delayed in submitting his designs to Mr. Insull, for he was put to the test of his best ingenuity by the various architectural requirements I had suggested. But in the course of a fortnight he sent what he was pleased to term "revised plans" to Mr. Insull, whom he had in some way succeeded in persuading to return to New York and to remain there until the house should be well-nigh built. Cross told me one day, *sub rosa*, that my desires, so far as the Insull mansion was concerned, had caused him more anxiety than anything else during his career as an architect. But, by sheer persistence—directed toward a practical solution of the obstinate problem presented to him—he had reached what he deemed a satisfactory result for all concerned.

Mr. Insull promptly approved the plans, with one or two minor changes, and work was immediately commenced. While Red Gables was being erected, I went to New York and placed my finances in such shape that I should not need to look after them, if I did not so desire, in thirty years. After an absence of nearly three months, I returned to Fairfield. In a private interview with John Cross I was informed that the house was fast nearing completion. Mr. Insull had once been to see how the work was progressing, while I was away adjusting my business affairs.

Two months later I was ensconced between the walls of Red Gables, the beautiful home of Mr. Insull and his lovely bride. Before they had moved in I was

comparatively well settled in my cramped quarters. John Cross had rendered me other assistance. He helped to secure and store away, one dark night, several hundred cans of preserved meats, vegetables and other edibles in the narrow confines of my self-appointed abode.

I cannot write much longer. The candle is sputtering in its socket and the dawn is not far off. I shall leave Red Gables before the great orb lights up the western hemisphere and I do not expect ever to return here. I leave the strong-box for you, Bronson Insull, whom I have watched from your infancy with an interest and love little short of paternal. I believe that in some wise I have made my presence and personality felt by you. It has seemed better thus by psychological and telepathic influence to prepare you, at least in some degree, for this revelation, than to obtrude myself before your eyes; first, perhaps, to frighten you and then to suggest that I was a crazy outlaw whom it would be your duty to hand over to a constable.

I must assure you, before concluding this hastily indited screeed, that I was never personally seen by your dear, lamented mother while under this roof, though I know she was aware that I had indeed carried out my threat and was an unbidden inmate of Red Gables. I have often caught glimpses of her, though, believe me, I have been no Peeping Tom. I often passed my time in vacant rooms up-stairs and from behind closed shutters I have seen her walking on the lawn, or getting in or out of a carriage. The sight of her peaceful, saintly face was a heavenly balm to my soul—the solace from which I received the strength to endure, through Winter's cold and Summer's heat, the many hardships and discomforts of my situation.

Perhaps you will say I was a demon to do this monstrous and unnatural thing; but you will never know how wholly lost I have been in idolatry of your incomparable mother. Perhaps my reason was a slave to this strange caprice. In truth, in this lucid moment of reflection, I know that such has been the case. But, through it all, I never had one jealous pang save the one I experienced when I learned that Mr.

Insull was betrothed to her. Never have I said: "Oh, that this man would die!" I have always regarded him with sublime envy and her with such adoration as one would give to a goddess. That I bear your father no grudge or hatred is proved by my will, which contains a clause bequeathing him the sum of \$25,000. This I regard as substantially liquidating my debt to him—contracted as an unlicensed boarder and lodger of long standing.

The rest of my property is willed unprovisionally to you, and may prudence and good judgment guide you in its future management! Your mother's death was the greatest blow I have received in all these years. I realized that my one great reason for living under the roof of Red Gables was gone forever. There was you, to be sure, to whom I am more deeply attached than I can explain, for you have always been a good and worthy boy, Bronson. But your departure soon afterward left the old house desolate, in spite of the lively gatherings that took place in Red Gables. With a deepening sense of pity I watched the proceedings—pity mixed with a feeling of indignation at times; for when the bacchanal orgies were at their wildest pitch I could not refrain from beseeching the promoters to desist. So I was the ghost who demanded a suspension of the revels; I was the hobgoblin that disturbed your father's serenity—the spirit which he may, in moods regarded by himself as occult, have believed, forsooth, that of his wife.

Farewell! Live to some nobler end than I have done, dear boy. Take warning of my shortcomings and build for yourself a career worthy of your sweet mother's highest admiration. I must close now. As soon as this is sealed and placed in the strong-box, I shall go out into the world that has forgotten me—a broken-down old man for whom the brightest prospect is the peace of death. I could not, if I would, stay much longer at Red Gables, for I have overheard voices say it will be sold and that the man who is to succeed to the ownership will tear it down. So, I feel confident that the strong-box will be found and honestly delivered over to you. Adieu!

EMILE MARTINOT.



THE girl who loses her head sometimes finds it on another's shoulder.



FOR a person so old as Mrs. Grundy, her hearing and eyesight are truly remarkable.

THE DRAMA OF THE FUTURE

By Joseph P. Healey

TIME—1920. SCENE—Office of the manager of the Electric Theatre, New York. The production of the new play, "A Glut of Volts," is being arranged for. The DRAMATIS PERSONÆ are: MANAGER, ELECTRICIAN, INVENTOR, LEADING LADY, SOUBRETTE, LEADING MAN, COMEDIAN, AUTHOR, DRAMATIC CRITIC.

MANAGER (*to leading man*)—As I understand it, Mr. Handsome, you will be required not alone to be shot from a cannon in the new play, but to be run over by a trolley car, electrocuted, revived, hauled feet first through a long, dark tunnel, hanged, and to be used as the subject at a clinic lecture. Am I right?

LEADING MAN—Yes, sir; lots of dramatic action. I feel sure I'll make a hit—the first night, at any rate.

MANAGER—Yes; and after that, if you are not with us, we can call on the reserves from Professor Forcem's histrionic factory.

LEADING MAN—There are no lines to speak, I believe? (*Turns to electrician.*)

ELECTRICIAN—No, sir; you are to place yourself in my charge entirely.

LEADING LADY—Pardon me, Mr. Shockem, but do I fall from the sliding mountain in the first or the third act?

INVENTOR—That scene, my dear madam, will be the climax of the third act. It will be the hit of the piece. My invention is now perfected. As you fall from the apex of the mountain to escape from the clutches of the villain, the mountain slides forward and catches you. At the same time there is a volcanic eruption of real live coals, which kills the villain. It is to

be hoped that the suit of mail which has been ordered for him will be ready in time.

AUTHOR (*apologetically to manager*)—Do you not think it would be appropriate, Mr. Catchem, to introduce a speech or two during the mountain scene, to indicate that there is trouble between the heroine and the villain? Just a "My God!" or two?

MANAGER (*turning fiercely on the author, who shrinks away*)—Certainly not. If we devote any time to the recital of lines or speeches, much of the dramatic action would have to be cut. The fact that Miss Innocent falls off the mountain while running away from the villain will indicate to the audience that he is not *persona grata* to her.

SOUBRETTE (*blithely*)—In the first act, Mr. Shockem, when the plot of the play is thrown on my skirts during the electro-magnetic dance, would it not be a good idea for me to turn a handspring or two?—though I like best the old style of telling the comedian the plot while I'm dusting the furniture.

INVENTOR—I wouldn't advise the handspring, Miss Lively. It would mix the plot up, and if the wires were to become tangled the action would be delayed, and, besides, unnecessary expense would be incurred by your be-reaved relatives or the Actors' Fund, which, at present, has its hands full burying impecunious members of the profession.

COMEDIAN—I am perfectly satisfied with my rôle, Mr. Shockem, but the ending is rather unusual, I think. For many hundreds of years all well-regulated melodramas came to an end by

the comedian marrying the soubrette. Instead of that, this play ends with my departure, together with the survivors of the play, for South Dakota to get a divorce.

INVENTOR (*coldly*)—That cannot be helped, Mr. Borem. My electric tunnel, which shoots the entire company from the stage away up to White Plains, must have a show. We have already made arrangements either to board the company nightly up the State, or else provide them with railway tickets back to the city. If the play is not a success, you will find the electric tunnel quite handy on the first night.

DRAMATIC CRITIC—Oh, you can

make your mind easy on that score. I shall see to it that the play makes a hit—in the papers—and that the house will be packed nightly for many months.

AUTHOR (*meekly*)—Might I suggest a few lines——?

MANAGER (*interrupting*)—No, no; entirely unnecessary.

AUTHOR—But——

Before he can protest any further he is seized by the office-boy and whisked into the landing. The actors, actresses, et al., file out quietly, and as they pass through the stage door look admiringly at the electric ambulance, which has been called in readiness for the first rehearsal of the new play.



A BOOK OF VERSES

ONLY a little book of little rhymes,
 Yet, when I read, there sudden seemed to ring
 Soft to my ears the distant caroling
 And happy notes of silver-hearted chimes
 That pealed in some Arcadian morning-tide,
 When like a rose on roses came the bride.

I know one morning, when the world was young
 And Spring was like a maiden garbed in green,
 Some Amaryllis turned to look and lean
 When melodies like these her shepherd sung,
 So clear, so delicate that scarce a bird
 Could shrill an answer to the notes he heard.

I think the great god Pan one day in mirth
 Piped him a song too fine and exquisite
 For weight of years to crush and quiet it;
 Too sweet to vanish wholly from the earth
 It loitered long in alien ways apart
 To spring at last in this new singer's heart.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



FORTUNATE FOR JACK

SHE—Jack has fallen in love with the widow.

HE—How fortunate! She had made up her mind to marry him, anyhow.

ON BEHALF OF DORINDA

By Elizabeth Duer

AUNT CHARLOTTE took off her eye-glasses and stirred her coffee. Breakfast is the best of times for receiving good news by mail, but when letters of an annoying nature are waiting to greet you, you might better stop in bed, for there you seem more removed from immediate action; at least you cannot burst to the rescue of anything or anybody till you have put on some clothes.

Aunt Charlotte toyed with an egg and buttered her toast. I could not urge her to eat, for I well knew that any perturbation of the spirit is an occasion for that united-labor-union, the digestion, to strike work and make a general congestion of alimentary traffic. Tears were beginning to gather in my aunt's eyes, and at last she spake with her tongue.

"Dorinda Spofford is a good woman and why she should be marked out by Providence for continual misfortune is hard to understand. It shakes one's belief in earthly rewards. Two years ago she lost her mother and with her their pension; at Christmas all her teeth fell out, and now she writes to say she is getting blind, and I—" Here Aunt Charlotte checked herself. Perhaps she had been going to say, "I have given all I can spare," but she did not allow herself the complaint.

"Why don't you say it out, you generous old dear?" I exclaimed. "You have been helping her to support herself for these two years, and now, if she is to become entirely dependent, you don't know what is to be done."

"She must be taken care of, Polly, even if we have to move to a cheaper house and take her to live with us."

Dorinda Spofford was our cousin, Aunt Charlotte's and mine. She was old, embittered, exacting, rasping, utterly impossible. Was she to be let into the modest ménage which Aunt Charlotte shared with me, to our joint loving satisfaction?

"Are we her only relations?" I asked, searching for a loophole of escape.

"Oh, no!" she said. "There is Trenor Taylor, just as near to her on her father's side as we are on her mother's; but he won't do anything. I asked him to help two years ago when Aunt Harriet died and he never even answered my letter; and at Christmas I asked him to give fifty dollars toward her new teeth, and he wrote back, 'Let her go piecemeal; there will be less of her to make mischief.'"

I giggled. "He gave the money all the same, didn't he?" I asked, with a girl's optimism.

"He did not," said poor Aunt Charlotte.

"Is he rich?" I questioned.

"Rich and with no claims," she responded.

Aunt Charlotte drank her coffee. She was particular about it, and I must say it was the best.

"They tell me," she said, sighing, "that Brazilian coffee costs only eleven cents the pound. We must try it, Polly." And my aunt left the room with that chastened look which I feared foreshadowed a cheap and nasty future flavored with Dorinda Spofford.

I came in from a walk rather late for luncheon and found Aunt Charlotte lying on her sofa, a victim to one of

her worst neuralgic attacks—a simple case of agitation *versus* food, with a headache as the costs. I went to my lonely meal, already a little more meager than usual, as the initial tribute to Dorinda's needs. As I ate, a thought came to me, which soon hardened into a resolution.

"Bring me the List, Phoebe," I ordered.

She brought one of the Social Directories so essential to town life. Why should a list of names furnish thrilling amusement to sage and fool alike? Once you begin its perusal it is impossible to put it down.

I was soon on the trail of the T's, tracking Dorinda's miserly relative to his lair. There were Tailers and Taylors and one very aristocratic Taylour. There was a T. Van Brunt, and a G. T., and a T. S., and I fixed upon the last because I reasoned that his name was, in all probability, Trenor Spofford, as his connection with Dorinda was on the father's side. He lived at No. — Fifth avenue. I knew the house—it happened to be the next number to some friends of mine—a gloomy brownstone abomination, just fit to shelter such a churl.

Whatever my plans were I did not mean to share them with Aunt Charlotte; first, because she might stop me, and then because she had had enough to bear for one day. But when I crept into her room to kiss her, I put a deceitful question.

"I suppose Cousin Dorinda's stingy relation lives in the country," I said, feeling sure he lived within five blocks of us, but anticipating the flood of information that always follows a wrong conjecture.

"Why should you curse the country with him?" feebly laughed Aunt Charlotte. "He lives in Fifth avenue, next to the Richmans. You must know the house."

It was getting toward five o'clock when I left home that March afternoon on my self-imposed mission. I had made myself very smart, for the advice of *Polonius* as to the effect produced by good clothes was a house-

hold maxim, and this household had much at stake on the issue of my enterprise.

As I, coming from the north, reached the steps of Mr. Taylor's house, a gentleman also approached, coming from the south, and we went up side by side, he selecting his latch-key from the bunch on his chain as he neared the door.

"The miser himself!" I thought; "but younger than I supposed.

"Oh! what will he be at fifty,
If Nature keep him alive,
If he finds himself penurious
When he's only thirty-five?"

I was only nineteen and I considered him distinctly middle-aged.

"Won't you come in?" he said. "Did you wish to see me?"

"I wish to see Mr. Taylor," I answered.

"Ah, then your business is with the individual rather than the house-owner," he said, dismissing the idea of the book-vender; and I, quick to take offense, held my head in the air and assumed Aunt Charlotte's loftiest manner.

He touched the door-bell as he stood back to let me enter the door he had just opened, and, as we stepped into the hall, a servant hurried forward. I was ushered into the room on the left of the front door and then the man hastened to relieve his master of coat and hat.

"Tea at once, Edwards," I heard him say.

I was enjoying the warmth of his blazing wood-fire and, out of the corner of my eye, taking in the arrangement of the room during my few seconds of solitude.

The miser did not stint himself in home comforts. Low bookcases wainscoted all the wall spaces and over the chimney-place was the portrait of a handsome clerical old gentleman in the gown and hood of one of the English universities—Oxford, I thought, for the gown was red and the hood a sort of pink. Above the bookcases the walls were well covered with clever water-colors, many of

them so questionable in subject that I trembled for the old gentleman over the fireplace, lest, being forced to endure so much gay company, he might end by embracing it.

My host joined me so noiselessly that I did not have time to turn my eyes from the lively sisterhood on his walls.

"This is my own particular sitting-room," he explained. "I do not often entertain ladies here, but the drawing-room is in the hands of work-people."

"I must not trespass upon your time," I began, suddenly realizing the difficulties of the task I had undertaken. "I came to see you about a person equally near to us both, whose misfortunes, I fear, you know only too well. You acknowledge the claims of kinship, do you not, Mr. Taylor?"

I came a step toward him and nervously clasped my hands.

"A veritable modern Boaz, I give you my word," he answered, laughing. "Let me hope you yourself are the Ruth in question."

Aunt Charlotte has brought me up with a reverence for the Bible and I knew I did wrong to smile, so I set my lips primly.

"You know quite well I am no relation of yours," I said, reprovingly. "It is Cousin Dorinda Spofford who is in trouble, and it is only proper to inform you that she is now nearly blind and no longer able to do anything toward her own support."

"Do I understand you that Cousin Dorinda has equal claims upon us both on the score of relationship? Then why are we not cousins, Miss—Do you know you have never told me your name?" he exclaimed.

"Mary Reglis," I answered. "But I am not your cousin, only Cousin Dorinda's on the mother's side."

"And where do I come in?" he asked, gravely.

"On the father's," I answered.

"And what do you propose to do for Cousin Dorinda?" he asked.

"Ah, there's the trouble!" I said. "Aunt Charlotte says we must take

her to live with us, and she is so cross she will spoil everything, and we have been so happy, Aunt Charlotte and I. I don't mind making retrenchments in order to help in her support, but I should hate to have her live with us."

"Do you suggest that she live with me?" he questioned, while his eyes twinkled and seemed to take in his naughty surroundings.

"She might stop where she is in peace and plenty if you would do your share," I said, boldly. "Aunt Charlotte and I will gladly subscribe our half."

"In short, you propose to syndicate Dorinda," he said, regarding me with amusement.

"Does that mean to divide her in shares?" I asked, pleased at the businesslike sound of my question.

"Nothing quite so blood-thirsty," he replied. "It means that we combine to float the lady on financial waters. I am not such a *Shylock* as to like Dorinda in sections."

"Who was it who wished to let her fall to pieces when he refused to help pay for her false teeth?" I retorted, glad to hit back.

"Not I, surely," he exclaimed.

"Just you and no other," I answered.

Merriment was getting the better of him and I began to be uncomfortable. Was he wickedly heartless? It was mean-spirited, too, to say cruel things and then repudiate them.

I rose to go, saying: "I see you are only amusing yourself at my expense and nothing is to be hoped for from you. Aunt Charlotte and I will take care of Dorinda."

"Stay a moment, Miss Reglis," he said. "You mistake me; perhaps I do mean to help. I consider a reduced gentlewoman the person of all others to command the sympathy of her equals—I mean relations," he added, hastily; "and to contribute to such a lady's comfort is a privilege. Plainly name the sum you wish me to give and I will let you know my decision to-morrow."

"She can live on a thousand dollars

a year," I answered, "and of course your share would be half."

He bowed his acceptance of my statement, and at the same time tea was brought. How good the hot muffins did look! But I began to feel the situation unusual, to say the least, and so I declined his pressing invitation to remain.

"Aunt Charlotte might not like my being here at all," I said, coloring. "I came secretly because I guessed that worry about Cousin Dorinda was what was making her ill, and I thought that if some frank, sensible person explained the case to you, you would acknowledge the claim."

"Now that you are here," he said, with a most winning smile, "why not make my tea for me?"

Those muffins were done to a turn.

"I will stop," I said, with sudden determination. "There can be no more harm in drinking tea than in talking!"

"Less, sometimes," he replied.

He seemed to grow younger as we talked, hardly middle-aged, not at all miserly. Dorinda must have antagonized the man, or he must have softened wonderfully under my influence. Decidedly, I liked him!

We fell to discussing the portrait as we drank our tea, or rather as I drank mine, for I noticed he hardly tasted his, though I had put in plenty of sugar and cream, and he told me little anecdotes of his uncle, the bishop; how he had started in life as a soldier and had changed from the army to the Church militant at the end of the Civil War, and how his wife could never reconcile herself to the change or forgive him, because he had concealed his intention from her until it was an accomplished fact. I said he had betrayed his part of the contract; that she had married a soldier and I didn't know but what to be allied also to a clergyman was polygamous under the circumstances, and we laughed heartily at my silly joke. Then he asked whether a deception, even an innocent one, was unpardonable in love and friendship, and I said,

"Quite so," and he didn't agree with me. Just then a servant brought in a great vase of roses that had come from his country hothouses, and he ruthlessly pulled out as many as I could carry and gave them to me; and then we talked of flowers and I said roses were the only ones worth having.

As I started to go I extended my hand.

"To-morrow about this time I shall let you know about Cousin Dorinda," he said, bowing over my glove.

"Oh, I'll come here for your answer," I said, simply.

A shade of embarrassment crossed his face.

"I think perhaps you had better let me send the money to you, if I decide to give it," he answered. "Your aunt might not think well of your visits."

Somehow I felt abashed and hurried from the house; and yet what harm was there in visiting Dorinda Spoford's recalcitrant cousin?

The next day at five o'clock a messenger brought a sealed package to me. It contained five one-hundred-dollar bills and a letter. The letter said:

MY DEAR MISS REGLIS:

I acknowledge Cousin Dorinda's claims upon one who has more than his share of this world's goods. As, however, I am of a somewhat secretive disposition, may I ask that this transaction be known to no one but yourself and aunt?

I am, very sincerely yours,

T. S. TAYLOR.

"Aunt Charlotte!" I exclaimed to my aunt, who was still keeping her bed in a darkened room, "I might as well make a clean breast of my doings while you have been ill. I went yesterday to see the miser, Mr. Taylor, and I laid Cousin Dorinda's case before him so convincingly that he has just sent me five hundred dollars toward her support for this year."

"Wonders will never cease!" said Aunt Charlotte, quite cheerfully. "But, Polly, while it was brave in you to fight Dorinda's battles, it was hardly conventional for a young girl to go alone to a gentleman's house,

no matter how old and queer you may have thought him."

I wonder why I didn't say I thought him neither. Girls are strange creatures. The truth was, he had taken entire possession of my fancy and was never out of my thoughts.

Every day after that a box of roses came for me, anonymously, and they were just like the roses Mr. Taylor had given me when I visited him; yet a girl cannot acknowledge anonymous flowers. Aunt Charlotte thought they came from Larry Skippard. Callow, silly Larry Skippard! Why, he was almost too young to be trusted with pocket money; he couldn't have been more than twenty-two! Of course, I did like him at one time, but what woman wishes a boy lover?

About a month later I was dining at the Skippards. It was one of those mixed companies of old and young which are often the pleasantest. The last guest to arrive was Dorinda's cousin, Mr. Taylor, but he didn't see me and we went in to dinner; I with that simpleton, Larry Skippard, and he with the great Mrs. Shad. But—was there ever such luck?—he sat next to me! I couldn't resist laying my hand on his arm as we seated ourselves. He turned in surprise and then such an expression of pleasure came over his face! I am afraid we were rude to our legitimate companions, for I hardly spoke to Larry, and Mr. Taylor seemed to begrudge the few words he was forced to exchange with Mrs. Shad.

We talked about Dorinda and Aunt Charlotte's reproof to me for visiting him, and finally he said that since we could claim a mutual chaperon in Mrs. Skippard, we must do something pleasant in the way of theatre parties, and much more to that effect. Then he whispered that he had thought of nothing but me since that never-to-be-forgotten afternoon, and had I got his roses? I might as well own plainly that it was all over with me.

When I reached home that evening Aunt Charlotte had gone to bed. She had spent a tiresome day shopping

for Dorinda and I had not the heart to disturb her, so I did not see her till breakfast-time the next morning.

I noticed as I approached to kiss her good morning that she looked excited. She had not made her coffee and, instead of eating her breakfast, she was reading, through her gold lorgnette, the seventh page of the morning paper.

"Just see here, Polly!" she exclaimed, pointing to a death notice. "'Suddenly, at his residence in this city, on the evening of April 15th, Trenor S. Taylor. Notice of funeral hereafter.'"

"Oh, it can't be! it can't be!" I cried; and then, seeing her look of amazement, I managed to control myself by a supreme effort of the will. But that breakfast lives in my memory as a horror.

Aunt Charlotte rallied me about my sentimental regard for that forlorn old Taylor man and told me that possibly Dorinda might be his only heir. She nearly set me crazy harping on the money advantages to Dorinda, till I felt like shrieking, "Let Dorinda fall to pieces!" as he had once said. Finally, I could stand it no longer and getting my coat and hat, I went out into the April sunshine.

I stopped at a florist's and spent the last penny in my purse buying all the gay Spring flowers I could carry, roses and jonquils and pinks. Is not death cold and pale enough without travesting it with white, waxy blossoms? Then I turned my unwilling feet toward his house.

Every window was open, with frilled curtains blowing gaily in the breeze. "Airing, before shutting up forever!" was my interpretation. An undertaker's wagon was standing a little below; a man jumped out with a mass of crape in his arms. I ran up the steps, determined my flowers should get there ahead of that ghoulisish bundle; but before I could put my hand on the bell, the door flew open and Mr. Taylor stood before me.

I never quite knew what I did, but

he says I burst into a hysterical laugh, and gasping, "I thought you were dead!" pitched forward into the hall in a dead faint, almost before he could catch me in his arms.

The first thing I remember was lying on the sofa in Mr. Taylor's library, with his uncle, the bishop, looking down at me from the chimney-place and the lightly attired ladies mocking me from the walls.

"I ought not to be here," I said, mindful of Aunt Charlotte's rebuke; and I tried to rise, but he checked me.

"Wait till you are stronger," he entreated. "No one knows you are here, not even my servants. I was letting myself out of the door when you made

your somewhat hurried entrance." And his smile was very sweet.

"I have a fancy," he continued, seeing me incapable of conversation, "that those flowers were intended for old Mr. Trenor Taylor, next door but one. The poor old man died last evening, and has left no one to mourn him, except perhaps a tender-hearted little girl like you."

I saw it all and so did he, and, oddly enough, instead of being overcome with shame at having wrung money from a stranger, I did not give it a second thought and I'm sure Tom did not, either. We had many things to say about the future, and in those happy plans my syndicating of the now rich Dorinda had no part.



HER LITTLE MISTAKE

"YOUR missive calling me a flirt
Is just at hand," she wrote;
"I send you back your letters, sir,
And post them with this note.
I'm sorry that I can't return
Bonbons and flowers as well;
Consider we are strangers now.
Yours truly, Bessie Bell."

"Perhaps I wronged the little maid—
She may be true as steel,"
He sighed, and took the package up
And broke the crimson seal.
But just imagine his remarks,
Oh, reader, if you can,
For all those burning billets-doux
Were from the other man!

MINNA IRVING.



THE WIDOW'S MIGHT

SHE—How did she come to marry her second husband?
HE—I attribute it to his timidity.

JAMAIS SEULS

By Edith Bigelow

TEDDY GORING was a good young man. He never gambled, except at bridge in the best society; he smoked and drank in moderation, and he never made love to married women. He had an independent income, with which he got along comfortably and to the pleasure of his numerous friends who ate, drank and saw plays at his expense. His one love was a motor-car—the most exacting of mistresses. A woman is fairly simple in comparison to a motor-car. An automobile can go wrong in about five hundred and forty-two ways, and in each case the result may be death.

There came a day when Teddy met something that he liked as much as his motor-car. It was a pretty woman named Somers—married, but apparently semi-detached. She had a charming porcelain face and blue eyes, which were redeemed from insipidity by a frame of unexpectedly black hair. She did not talk much and yet—or perhaps therefore—she was charming. Teddy's honest soul curdled within him. He loved her madly—and she was married!

It was the fixed principle of Teddy's straightforward life that a man may not poach. Though he lived in a set that thought and acted otherwise, he clung to his ideals. Now, he repeated to himself the usual formulæ as to friendship, while his head burned and his hands froze. He would not give her up. He would love her—from a distance. Happy thought! He would take her out in the motor-car. He invited, she accepted. It was Winter, but the air was invigorating, the sun bright. Mrs.

Somers was dressed with all the trim smartness demanded by the occasion and, being an automobilist of experience, she wore thick stockings and serviceable boots. She comprehended several of the five hundred and forty-two things which might happen and she was prepared to walk home.

There is no other pursuit that so engrosses one's legs, arms, hands and brains as the driving of a motor-car. Teddy's profile was engaging, and it was constantly turned toward the lady. His face was like that of a hanging judge; he was watching the machine with strained attention, for any accident now meant not only loss of prestige to Teddy, but danger or discomfort to the woman he loved.

"Are you enjoying it?" asked Teddy, for one instant turning his handsome, flushed face toward his companion.

Mrs. Somers looked ecstatic in a Dresden-china way. "I love it!" she said. Then, as they shot madly down a hill, she added, "Ah, this is living!"

This ejaculation brought down the wrath of the gods, who presumably are jealous, not yet having acquired motor-cars.

The car ran down the hill, but it stopped short a little way from the bottom.

Teddy turned pale. "It's all right!" he said, hastily. "Don't scream!"

Mrs. Somers smiled. "I never scream," she said.

Teddy threw himself madly out of the machine, went around to the back and plunged his head in. His ejaculation was happily lost in the interior.

"What's happened?" asked Mrs. Somers.

Teddy emerged, red but composed. "Chain broken," said he, briefly.

"Is the chain very important?"

Teddy laughed, bitterly. What should Dresden china know of mechanics?

"It's the thing that makes the beastly thing go, that's all!" said he.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Somers, "I thought it went by steam."

Teddy concealed a smile with his fur glove. "I'm awfully sorry!" he said, avoiding an explanation of the relative importance of chains and steam. "It never happened before."

"Can't you mend it?"

"I'll try."

He again retired. Mrs. Somers composed herself, drew up her fur collar and began eating caramels. They were on the road to Richmond; it was a Saturday and many persons on foot and on wheels went by. Everybody stared at the motor with that pity dashed with contempt which is so freely lavished on automobiles that have not behaved well. It was cold, but there was a thaw setting in.

"Have a caramel?" called Mrs. Somers.

Teddy emerged, splashed with mud and grease. "If you will put it in my mouth, please—my hands are too dirty."

Mrs. Somers complied; it was the nicest caramel Teddy had ever eaten, and he returned refreshed to his tussle with the chain.

Mrs. Somers certainly was angelic. She looked up at the rooks and quoted poetry.

"Circling above us the black rooks fly
Forward, backward—lo, their dark shadows
Flit on the blossoming tapestry."

But there was no blossoming tapestry—only ragged, gray-brown fields and the wet road.

Finally Teddy Goring rose, straightened his long figure and told the truth like a man. The rueful expression of his face was heightened by a large spot of mud on his nose.

"It's no use," he said. "We're stuck. Please get out."

He was terribly splashed.

Mrs. Somers looked at him sweetly, and again quoted poetry:

"The man I love must have a touch of earth."

"I'm a hopeful candidate!" said Teddy. It was the most unguarded thing he had ever said to Mrs. Somers.

The long and the short of it was that they walked to the station and took a train, having housed the motor with a man who was used to nursing sick automobiles.

The next Saturday they tried again. That time the boiler was burned.

On Tuesday once more they ventured; something else gave way.

"Now," said Mrs. Somers, "we have broken everything except the commandments. Surely, next time we shall get somewhere."

"Next time," said Teddy, "we'll break the spell." He did not mention the decalogue.

There had been enough sitting on mud banks, with a puddle for a footstool, but Mrs. Somers's good humor never wavered.

Of course, Teddy worshiped her more and more madly. He was growing very thin and looked at least two inches taller than was necessary. When he was not trying to see his lady he was prosecuting investigations as to the absent Somers. In neither was he very successful. He never managed to be long alone with his beloved; she had a great many friends and appeared to like her drawing-room full of them. He had not the ghost of an idea whether she liked him or not. He was so in love that he wished he had not eaten the caramel, but had saved it as a keepsake.

Weeks of hopeless yearning carried him on into the Spring. He resolved to make bolder efforts to see Mrs. Somers alone; though he still intended to live in silence, he could not deny himself the opportunity of discovering whether she was doing the same. So he planned a series of expeditions. But he had not reckoned with a curious fact; he and his lady were extraor-

dinarily attractive to all those with whom they came in contact. There was a small, quiet, but thoroughly respectable restaurant tucked away in a corner of Chelsea, where they occasionally lunched. The proprietor was an Italian, with the usual Latin proficiency in scenting an intrigue or imagining one which was non-existent. He displayed a tender interest in the pair; for them were reserved his best caviare, his rosier Chianti; he hovered near the table, with that delicate mixture of servility and equality never attained by the clumsy Anglo-Saxon. When he was temporarily called away to give grudging attention to other customers, his place was taken by the blacking-brush-headed waiter, who followed—at a distance—the methods of the master. Teddy could not speak to Mrs. Somers without being overheard by one or the other of the two men.

One evening Teddy and Mrs. Somers went to the Criterion for supper. Instantly the manager sent Mrs. Somers a corsage bouquet of violets—and she was the only woman in the room so distinguished. All this was complimentary but annoying, and at last Teddy decided to put an end to it. He planned a motor expedition to St. Albans and determined that, come what might, before the day was over he would tell his love. All the obstacles which he had encountered naturally brought him to this decision. He would not make love—this strictly moral youth!—but he would merely mention with commendable coolness the simple fact that he loved the lady madly. It is one thing to affirm, another to demand. He would only affirm.

When the day dawned Teddy woke from a fevered dream, in which he was engaged merely in mentioning simple facts to Mrs. Somers, who sat on top of a tall iceberg, assuring him that she loved caramels. Taking this to be an omen, Teddy bought a box of the sweets and appeared at the appointed hour in the motor-car before the door of the beloved.

Youth, Spring, love! Mrs. Somers, as she stepped into the automobile, looked the embodiment of all those desirable things.

“To-day, if ever!” thought Teddy.

The machinery was that day on the side of morality. It was more troublesome than usual and thoughts of love fled on the wings of escaping steam, scared by the fumes of petrol.

The road was in a villainous condition, covered with sharp flints which constantly threatened puncture.

Mrs. Somers was placid; she wore a half-developed smile and ate caramels. At last—a long last—after hitches innumerable, threatened disasters, averted catastrophes, they really arrived at St. Albans. But Teddy’s joy in seeing it was damped by the discovery that the coffee-room was full of people. What was still sadder was the fact that they were friends of Mrs. Somers.

They welcomed her noisily and, while Teddy was in the stable, bestowing his beloved motor-car in safety, they assured her that they would all lunch together; which they proceeded to do.

Teddy was taciturn and drank a great deal of wine. The rest of the party laughed all the time and seemed to enjoy the occasion extremely. After luncheon Mrs. Somers and the rest visited the cathedral, while Teddy smoked twenty cigarettes, one after another, and strode viciously up and down outside the sacred fane. He was almost prepared to hear that Mrs. Somers had promised to drive home in the coach which had brought her friends. But the worst was over; Mrs. Somers was firm and together she and her young man glided away in the motor.

Teddy’s profile looked more than ever like that of a hanging judge. It was difficult for him to hide his feelings. He longed to break up the Dresden-china calm of his companion; words, seething, burning, overwhelming words, rushed to his set lips. But at the moment when they were about

to escape, one of the five hundred and forty-two things happened.

It was a thing incomprehensible to the mere amateur and therefore need not be described. It meant a long walk, with a train at the end of it. Mrs. Somers was ominously silent as she toiled over the flints; growing confidence in Teddy and lessening distrust of the motor, combined with the warm weather, had led her to wear thin stockings and low shoes. The flints were sharp and the caramels were all gone. It was no time for declarations; only profuse apologies were in order.

Once in the train, Teddy thought, all might be well. The train, however, was crowded; it stopped at every station and at every station some one got in. Once, for five minutes, Teddy and Mrs. Somers were alone. He precipitated himself on the seat next to her with such reckless suddenness that she positively jumped.

"Oh, I *must* tell you," he burst out; "you *will* forgive me—I can't help it" He struggled for utterance.

Mrs. Somers looked stern.

"It's a beastly machine. I should think you'd buy another one," she said.

"It isn't the machine—but I must let off steam, you know."

"Yes, and it makes a beastly noise."

"Some fellows can make the running without any trouble."

"You could with a better one; why do you stick to this?"

Teddy was now quite desperate. "Can't you see, don't you understand," he panted, "that I—I——?"

The train glided into a station and an old lady got in. Teddy Goring spoke no more.

His whole soul was fixed on the quarter of an hour during which he would be in a cab with his adored one. He feverishly rehearsed the sentence he would have time to enunciate, like an economical person counting the words of a cablegram.

He took the first cab that came. A hasty glance at the horse assured him

that the drive would not be too short, but he omitted to inspect the cabby.

As they ambled uncertainly out of the station, the trap opened and a sudden, girly voice inquired, benevolently:

"Where did yer say yer wanted to go?"

Teddy impatiently repeated the address.

"Never 'eard of no such place," observed the cabby, who still breathed alcoholically upon them from above.

Teddy went into elaborate explanations, while the horse gently strayed into an omnibus. It was merely a touch and they proceeded. The trap closed and Teddy turned to Mrs. Somers.

"Oh, my dear," he said, "it is too maddening. . . . I never can tell you—you must have seen——" He seized her hand. There was a click overhead.

"He's looking," murmured Mrs. Somers, "He's drunk. *Do* let us get out!"

Teddy hurled a sentence through the trap. "Stop!" he thundered. In a moment he had tossed the man a disdainful shilling and put himself and Mrs. Somers into another cab.

"I'm a Jonah!" he wailed; "it's no use!" The horse trotted briskly. It was dark, but the lamps shone on Mrs. Somers's face and it was distinctly stern.

"Mr. Goring," she said, "I think we shall have no more automobile excursions."

"Oh, you don't mean that!" Teddy almost wept. His courage had evaporated.

"I certainly do," she said.

The cab clattered up to the door.

On the doorstep Mrs. Somers gave Teddy her hand.

"Good night, Mr. Goring."

"Mayn't I come in for a moment?"

"Not to-night; I'm tired."

"To-morrow, then?"

"If you like." And the door shut.

Next day Teddy Goring appeared at the door. Mrs. Somers was alone and radiant. He clasped her hand.

"You're not angry?" he pleaded. "You may count on me!" He
 "No," said she; "I love the whole could scarcely breathe.
 world to-day." "My husband," said she, "has been
 "Thank Providence I'm in the estranged for years, but that is
 world then!" cried Teddy. "What over and he is coming home to-
 makes you so happy?" morrow!"
 "Why should I not be? Dear friend, Teddy congratulated her, drank a
 I know that you will rejoice with me." cup of tea and went home.



ORIENTAL

THE air is filled with scent of musk
 Blown from the garden's court of bloom,
 Where rests the rose within her room
 And dreams her fragrance in the dusk.

Above, attended by her stars,
 The full moon rises, round and white—
 A boat in the blue Nile of night
 Drifting amid the nenuphars.

And now the nightingale, who knows
 A lyric ecstasy divine,
 Begins his song. Ah! sweetheart mine,
 What shall love's answer be, my rose?

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



NOT IN A CASE LIKE THAT

BIBBS—Do you believe that two can live cheaper than one?
 GIBBS—Not if one happens to be living a double life.



TWO CHANNELS

THE light of Calm Resistance, night and day,
 Guides to the harbor of the Higher Way;
 Yet battered barques go sometimes drifting in,
 Through sullen splendors of Remembered Sin.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



IN order to be eagerly welcomed at good houses, plead prior engagements at great ones.

TWO WEEKS' SUMMER VACATION

DUST breathed in on R. R.	1 lb. 4 oz.
Average number of hours' sleep per night.	4
Number of miles danced.	40
Cost of one six-inch trout.	\$8
Number of square meals.	0
Fly bites.	98
Other bites.	980
Swore at bed.	14 times.
Cream tasted.	None.
Hotel bill.	\$80
Tips.	\$20
Total number of shirt-waists examined.	23
At a distance.	10
Near to.	7
Very close to.	4
Squeezed.	2
Golf-balls lost.	21
One engagement ring (total loss).	\$90
Number of weeks recuperating.	5

TOM MASSON.



NOTHING REMARKABLE

BIGGS—I once knew a man who had been married ten years and didn't know that his wife had false teeth.

BOGGS—That is strange.

“Not at all; she didn't have them.”



KINGS COME HIGHER

MRS. RICHMOND—A coronation must be a dreadfully expensive affair.

MRS. BRONXBOROUGH—Yes, indeed! Why, the dentist charged me ten dollars just for crowning one tooth.



HUMAN NATURE

“IT is your plain duty, and——”

“Oh, yes; and that is what makes it so unattractive. I wish we could, once in a while, have a duty so ornamental that it would be a pleasure to contemplate it.”